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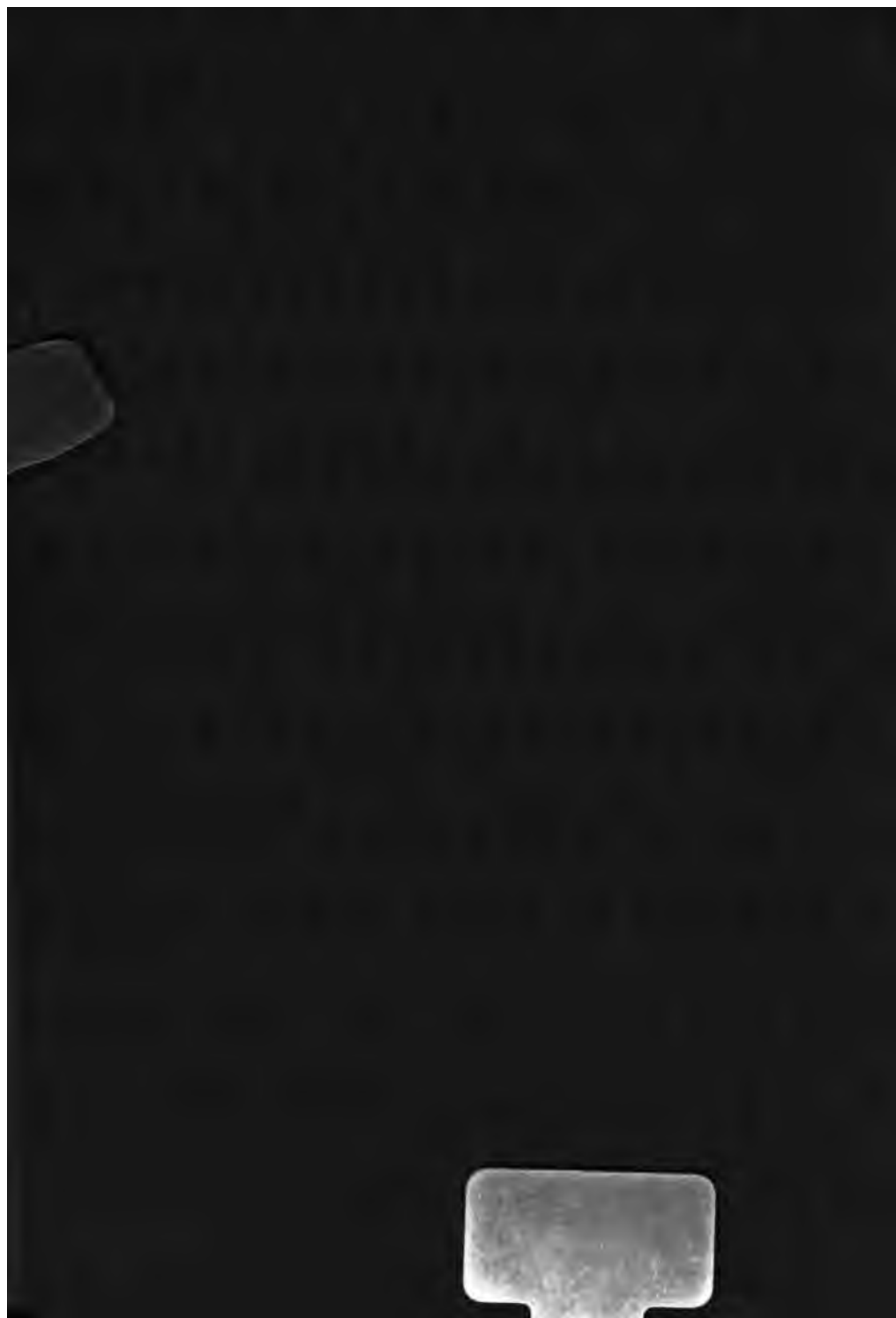
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THE BOYS' AND GIRLS' BOOK OF
TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE





FRYING-PAN COFFEE.

THE BOYS & GIRLS BOOK OF TRAVEL & ADVENTURE

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS



STRAHAN AND COMPANY LIMITED

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CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
THE MERCHANT OF THE WILDERNESS <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	1
A NIGHT IN THE THAMES TUNNEL <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	12
THE TWIN CAPTIVES OF GHUZNEE <i>With 2 Illustrations.</i>	18
A FIGHT BETWEEN A HORSE AND A TIGER <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	34
FIRE IN THE WOODS <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	62
AN ADVENTURE WITH A WOLF <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	46
A NIGHT IN THE SNOW <i>With 2 Illustrations.</i>	50
UNUSUAL FISHING <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	56
A MIDSHIPMAN'S FIRST COMMAND <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	63
YARNS <i>With 3 Illustrations.</i>	77
THE IGUANA'S EYES <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	89
UNCLE BEN, THE OLD MAN-O'-WAR'S MAN <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	94
ALONE IN THE BUSH	114
A BEAR SCHOOL <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	120
THE LAST MAN IN THE BATTERY <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	123
A CLIMB UP A STEEPLE	128
A BEAR-HUNT IN THE PYRENEES <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	133
THE WRECK OF THE <i>HARLINGEN</i> <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	136
VENUS AND WARRIGAL <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	138
AT THE SIEGE OF STRASBURG <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	145
THE PEASANT HERO	149
MONSIEUR TOPPET'S ADVENTURE <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	157
A RUSSIAN SLEDGE-DRIVER'S STORY <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	160

	<i>Page</i>
TRAPPED IN THE ICE <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	166
RUNNING AWAY TO SEA <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	178
THE DEMON WOLF <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	189
AMONG THE WHALES <i>With 2 Illustrations.</i>	192
THE WOUNDED SIKH; OR, TRUE TO HIS SALT <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	201
JEM'S YARN <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	206
MR. HIGHCLIFF HOPPER IN SWITZERLAND <i>With 3 Illustrations.</i>	210
UP AN AFRICAN RIVER <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	220
A TASTE OF THE SEA <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	334
THE BITER BIT <i>With 2 Illustrations.</i>	239
THE FAIR PILOT OF LOCH URIBOL	245
IN JAPAN <i>With 7 Illustrations.</i>	252
SPRING GALES <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	265
UNDER THE NORTH STAR <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	269
AT DEAL <i>With 2 Illustrations.</i>	272
COMMITTED TO THE DEEP <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	280
HOW WE SPENT A WINTER IN ALGIERS <i>With 9 Illustrations.</i>	288
ON A CREEK IN A COT	298
A RUN ROUND LONDON'S EMERALD RING <i>With 11 Illustrations.</i>	305
AN ADVENTURE IN AFRICA <i>With 1 Illustration.</i>	323
ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES... .. <i>With 6 Illustrations.</i>	327
BAZAARING IN CAIRO <i>With 6 Illustrations.</i>	350
A WILD COUNTRY... .. <i>With 2 Illustrations.</i>	360
ON SHORE IN THE SOUTH SEAS	373

THE MERCHANT OF THE WILDERNESS.

IT was a magnificent autumnal evening. Our ship was covered with canvas towering to the very truck ; her studding-sails were spread out like the wings of an immense sea-bird ; and she "staggered," as the sailors say, under a fresh quarter-wind, with as much as she could carry, neither less nor more. The horizon was clear—a rare thing at sea—and gave promise of a glorious sunset. We were in the middle of the Atlantic, and not a sail in sight ; so that we seemed to be the living centre of the whole visible world—of the ocean which swept around us, and the blue dome of the cloudless sky that descended over us, resting its huge rim upon the edge of the plain of waters. The passengers had finished dinner, and were pacing the deck ; or, broken up into little parties, were singing, telling stories, reading, or gazing over the bulwarks upon the ruddy rays of light becoming more intense through the western clouds that gathered round the setting sun. Such delightful evenings on ship-board always spread a happiness throughout the whole vessel. Sickness and moroseness are both banished ; and those who ordinarily "dwell apart" become frank, affable, and communicative.

It was so with one of the passengers, whose appearance and manners had arrested my attention ever since we had left harbour. He was a man of ordinary stature, and of a light wiry make. There was something peculiarly striking in his countenance, yet one could hardly tell what that something was. The features were all small and well formed ; the complexion dark and swarthy ; the hair lank and jet black ; the eye—yes, therein lay the mysterious *something*.

For four days I never heard that man open his lips. He sat during

meals at the corner of the table near the door of the saloon, nearly opposite to me, and separated always by a considerable gap from his next neighbour. He seldom raised his head while eating; never partook of more than one dish, and of that very sparingly. He ate very rapidly, and never drank anything stronger than water; so that his meal, begun always late, and taken in silence, was over in a few minutes, and his seat again empty. When on deck, he paced up and down from morning till night, speaking to no one, and apparently absorbed in his own thoughts. His step was as peculiar to himself as were his other habits—short and rapid and noiseless. Like a wild beast speeding towards its prey, he seemed to glide along the deck. But no one could look at that face without feeling there was something behind it “out of the common.” That eye! How quickly it glanced round, and seemed to fasten on everything and everybody! now changing to calm sadness, brooding in deep thought; or suddenly—one knows not why—becoming fixed with a sharp piercing glance of fire, beneath the contracted eyebrows, as if it gazed upon a spirit; while the nostrils were distended, the lips compressed, and the features lighted up with deep emotion.

A total stranger myself to all the passengers, I could not make the inquiries which I felt prompted by curiosity to make, about this unknown person. But on the beautiful autumnal evening I have described, two passengers beside me, while conversing about the great emigration then taking place from the United States to the shores of the Pacific, happened to forget the name of some dangerous pass. “What *is* the name?” exclaimed an American, stamping his foot with irritation, and knitting his brow. “Jonada del Muerto, between Chihuahua and Santa Fe,” said the unknown one, without lifting his eyes or speaking another word. Then rising from his seat, he proceeded to the deck as if he had uttered something in a dream.

“Queer chap, that!” remarked one of the speakers, as he gazed after him. “I knew *he* knewed it, if man did.”

“Who is he?” I inquired.

“Well, I expect,” said the American, “that he does some business in the Far West. I heard a St. Louis man—that tall, red-haired fellow at the other table—say that his life would be one of the *loudest* in any language, if it were in print.”

This description, peculiar though it was, made me desire a closer acquaintance with the stranger; and, accordingly, I was soon on the quarter-deck beside him. After a few distant and cautious approaches

based upon the state of the weather, the appearance of the ship, and the prospects of the voyage, &c., I managed to come so near him as to ask, alluding to his remark in the cabin, whether he had travelled far in the West? His answer, expressed in quiet and courteous language, prompted other questions; and these led to replies and counter-questions, until hour followed hour, and the gorgeous sunset was hardly noticed, and the rush of the waves was unheard, and the heave and pitch of the vessel unperceived, and the whole scene around me became as a dream.

My companion was one of those characters to whom an island like ours can no more afford room than a crib in the Zoological Gardens can afford scope to the camel or antelope for the display of their endurance or swiftness. His life, in its several features, may be very briefly stated. He was a German, well born, and connected with at least one noble family in Scotland. He had early left Europe to "push his fortune" in America. Partly from a love of adventure, and partly from the hope of opening up a new line of trade, he had, soon after landing, travelled across the continent, and penetrated north to the Columbia River, and south to Mexico and California. He ended by purchasing some mules, loading them with merchandise suited for sale or barter. Then taking a few intrepid spirits with him to share the dangers and profits of his enterprise, he commenced a regular business, which had increased upon his hands, until at last, after fourteen years of great success and singular endurance, he was eminently "The Merchant of the Wilderness."

His plan of operations was this:—He had thirty waggons, each waggon having attached to it ten to twelve mules, guided by two men, dead shots, armed with rifles. Their caravan, therefore, consisted of about three hundred and fifty mules and sixty men.

"Now, suppose these waggons loaded with merchandise, purchased chiefly in Manchester, and worth many thousand pounds," I asked the merchant, "what journey would they take?"

"Well, I'll tell you," was his reply. "It's *rather* a long one. Starting from New York or Philadelphia, I go right across to Ohio, sail down the river to the Mississippi, up the Mississippi to St. Louis, from St. Louis up the Missouri to Fort Independence, four miles inland; and there we all meet and begin our real journey *in earnest* to the West."

"Pray how far must you travel before beginning what you call your *real* journey?"

"Oh! not far—only across the United States, and down one river and up another,—let me see, perhaps about two thousand miles."

A pretty long introductory start, thought I. "But whither," I asked, "after you start from Fort Independence?"

"Twenty miles," he replied, "bring us across the Indian lines, and then we are clear of the settlements. Our course lies almost due west by south, for about a thousand miles across the prairie, until we strike the river Mora, ninety-five miles east from Santa Fe. Passing a spur of the Rocky Mountains, called Taos, I divide my company, sending thirty of my best men with the half of the goods along the Rocky Mountains, and as far as the Columbia, to trade with Indians and trappers for their furs. This journey occupies about six months. I proceed myself with the second division due south for about twenty-one hundred miles more to Durango and Zacatecas."

"And how long does this journey take?"

"I leave Fort Independence in the month of April, and reach Santa Fe in about three months; and in six months more I am back in Santa Fe from the south on my way home. For fourteen years I have been altogether only about three years in the settlements. I have constant travelling each year at the rate of six hundred miles a month."

Such was the route of the Merchant of the Wilderness. Perhaps some of my readers may endeavour to trace it on a map. It is something like a journey.

Space would fail me to recount a tenth of his strange adventures and hairbreadth escapes. The mere physical strength required for such a journey is immense. He and his men, during the twenty-four hours, had never more than two and a half hours of sleep, and were obliged to supply themselves with food by hunting the buffalo, or killing any game they chanced to meet. They cooked on fires made from the dry dung gathered from the grassy prairie, and lived for months without bread or vegetables.

Two or three years before I met the merchant, he had been placed in circumstances which demanded all his courage and decision of character. It was somewhere near the Rocky Mountains, and during one of those sudden and heavy falls of snow which he has once or twice encountered in his journeys. The cold at this time was extreme. After toiling some days through the snow to reach a river, the whole company got so benumbed and downhearted, that a halt was called by one of his men, who had on more than one occasion exhibited a tendency to rebellion. They all refused to go farther, though the river was within marching distance before sunset, if they put forth all their energies to gain it. The plan of the mutineers was probably to desert the waggons, and go off with the

mules. I forget now the details of the story. But I well remember the description he gave of his feelings, when he found himself hundreds of miles from any settlement, in the presence of sixty determined men with loaded rifles, and on the verge of mutiny. He knew that not a moment was to be lost. So, going up to the ringleader, he commanded him to mount and proceed. On his refusal, the merchant drew a pistol and shot him dead ! He then went to the next, and gave the same command. The mesmeric power of fearless determination and authority was felt, and the whole band proceeded. He took the first opportunity of explaining all his reasons to them ; and while they admitted, after their danger and sufferings were over, that he was right, and had saved their lives, he insisted upon giving himself up to justice when he reached the States. Being freed from blame, he then petitioned Congress for a law to regulate such authority as his in the wilderness.

"Were you not afraid of your life ?" I asked.

"With sixty rifles against me," he replied, "my life was easily taken. Either of us must succeed. If they did so, we must all have perished ; if I did so, we were safe : I was like the captain of a mutinous crew at sea."

One of the most singular escapes he had was during his last journey home. From some unknown cause, probably the flooding of distant rivers, the prairies often become like a shoreless sea, full of scattered green islands, which mark the more elevated knolls. One morning he and his band found themselves on such an island.

"We had just reached," he said, "Prairie Fork, two hundred and fifty miles from the nearest settlement at Fort Independence. The creeks were full. To proceed with our mules, for even a few miles, was impossible. Most of my men would have been drowned. Fortunately they had a large quantity of buffalo meat, and from the space of ground which was dry, and the probability of the water somewhat abating, food could be obtained for the mules. But the settlements *must* be reached to get assistance, or all might perish. I resolved to make the attempt on foot. Taking a small quantity of buffalo meat with me, I started alone, committing myself to the care of God, for it was a terrible journey, such as I never had to encounter before, and never can again. I once rode with three mules eight hundred and twenty miles in eight days, yet that was nothing to this journey ! The water had risen forty feet in some places. Almost every mile of dry ground or shallow water, where I could wade, was succeeded by some creek or deep gully, which I was obliged to swim.

One night I swam six large creeks. The cold, too, was great ; yet, by God's help, I travelled the two hundred and fifty miles in twelve days. I could not have slept more than two hours in the twenty-four, and then it was a sort of feverish doze in my wet clothes, on a prairie knoll. For the last four days I had not a particle of food, and was compelled to eat, or rather to gnaw, my leather mocassins and braces. My clothes were almost all torn from my back. To add to my suffering, I sprained my ankle, and for the last hundred and ten miles I dragged myself along with great agony—wet, naked, and famished. I at last reached the end of my journey, dreadfully swollen ; and for six weeks I was confined to bed. Assistance was sent to my men by a large escort with light canoes. With the loss of many of my mules, they at last arrived, but took *five weeks* to perform the journey. Thank God I saved them ! But it was worse than even the Jonada del Muerto."

I was told that this adventure had attracted great notice in the United States at the time, though I never met any account of it.

Another "peril in the wilderness" is from the Indians. The Blackfeet and Rappahoes are the deadliest enemies to the white man ; no distance will weary them. The merchant arranged his camp every night in preparation for an attack. The waggons were drawn up in a double van, the mules and men in the centre, while a watch was placed outside. If the alarm was given, his men, with loaded rifles, ranged themselves under the protection of the waggons, and thus their position was almost impregnable. Often, however, in a desperate attack they came to hand-and-hand struggle ; but though occasionally one of his men was killed, they came off always conquerors in the end.

A ludicrous incident occurred in one of these engagements. One of his men had been scalped by the Indians some years before, and survived, as very few have ever done, the terrible operation. He procured a wig when at the settlement, and again was in a *scrimmage* with the savage foe ; and once more the knife was ready to encircle the head whose hair was seized by the Indian, when lo ! the whole scalp came away of its own accord, and the bald head lay shining on the grass ! The Indian looked horror-struck. Expecting to meet a foe, he was persuaded that he had met a magician, and dropping both the wig and his tomahawk, he fled with a yell from the field of battle, leaving the enemy in possession of his precious life, and of his precious peruke, with the tomahawk to the bargain, as a trophy !

Some of the Indian tribes may be called cavalry regiments. The

Cumanchoes are a splendid race, numbering many thousands. They are all beautiful riders, women as well as men, and their hair, being permitted to grow until it reaches far down their back, waves gracefully in the wind as they charge at full gallop. Their ease on horseback, the singular rapidity and agility of their movements, can only be equalled by the most practised riders. This moment they sit erect, the next they are invisible. Whilst charging they stoop down, and draw the bow on the right side of the horse's neck; but suddenly stopping, the horse is wheeled round, and nothing is visible but a part of the foot of the rider, his whole body hanging down on the other side of the horse, and his existence discerned only by the arrow that comes whizzing from the unseen foe. The practised rifleman often shoots through the horse's neck to hit the *Cumanchoe's* head, which he knows to be on the other side. So chivalrous are these Arabs of the western desert, that they often give warning of their intended attack, that there may be a fair stand-up fight. I may add that they are all teetotallers, a virtue which, in the absence of charity in the Indian, may yet by some be thought capable of covering a multitude of sins in themselves, though the warriors deem it essential as a means of inflicting severer chastisement on others.

But the *Blackfeet*! These are the black snakes in the grass. The poor trappers have singular escapes from them. Unless I had perfect confidence in my informant, the facts which he related, and which others have since confirmed, of what some men are capable of enduring while effecting their escape from these wolf-like pursuers, seem altogether incredible.

"Well," said the merchant, "it *is* wonderful! Such a fellow as Kit Carsons, for instance——"

"Who was he?" I asked.

"Oh! a famous trapper, who all his life was among those wilds. Kit Carsons was once roused up by four warriors of the *Blackfeet*, who had vowed to kill him, as he had scalped one of the tribe in battle. They came on him as he was trapping on the North Fork, more than two hundred miles from Taos. I know the spot well. He had nothing for it but to throw away his precious rifle and traps, and run for his life. He did so, and Kit *could* run, I assure you; he was all small bone, with muscle like whipcord. He never stopped, ate, or slept till he reached Taos; and then he was only a few miles ahead of his foes. He stopped to drink in crossing the streams; that was all he had during the terrible race!"

"A race of two hundred miles! impossible!" I exclaimed.

"Longer, sir, longer, I believe. I have taken three days to the same journey on horseback, at the rate, I calculate, of more than seventy miles a day. No man who knows the Blackfeet and Kit Carsons would doubt it. *They* beat most runners; but Kit beats all!

"Talking of escapes from Indians," he continued, while he burst into a hearty laugh—a rare thing for my singularly grave friend, who seemed often to have caught the statue-like composure of the Redskin—"the best I ever knew was old *Peg-leg Smith's*. We called him Peg-leg because he had a wooden leg. He trapped along the Rocky Mountains, and sold to me, or to the Hudson Bays, at the mouth of the Columbia. Peg had a white horse—his only companion for many a long day. His weapons were a long bowie-knife and a rifle that never missed; but powder and shot were more precious to him than gold or diamonds. He knew the haunts of the Indians and their habits so well, that he managed generally to keep out of the way of unfriendly tribes. But once on a time either Peg was out of his way, or some roving Blackfeet were out of theirs, and so they spied him, and he fortunately spied them. Well, I need not tell you that the white horse was soon put to his paces, to gain the nearest but yet distant settlement of friendly Indians. Away went Peg, and after him went the Blackfeet, with a yell that might have made any man but an old trapper give up in despair. Miles were soon passed, until the savages were a good way behind, and sometimes out of sight; but he knew well that, once on his trail, they would run along it, without a halt, like bloodhounds, ay, weeks after he had passed; for these fellows can follow up the trail of a deer even six weeks after he has gone over the ground, and can detect his track, however frequently crossed by others, and in the end run him down. Poor Peg's horse left a surer impression behind than the deer. The enemy was coming on. Once dark, he thought he would cheat them, and arrive among his friends before day-break. But the old horse was becoming wearied. The sun had yet a good yard or two to descend. On he went, however, for some miles farther, always keeping a good look-out towards his rear, till, on reaching a height, he saw two of his enemies very close upon him, in full cry; so that it was evident they must very soon come up with him, more especially as he had entered on a mountain path. What was to be done? A few minutes more and they must be on him! He first unslung his rifle. He must risk one shot at all events, though but one more remained in his pouch. He made another preparation, which I shall tell you of immediately.



Halting on a rising knoll, he dismounted, made his obedient horse stand like a statue, and calmly awaited the approach of the two Indians, who must suddenly appear round a sharp corner, towards which he pointed his unerring rifle. Suddenly one of the enemy rushed on the path with a cry of surprise, and in a moment lay dead. The other appeared in a second after, when Peg, having unstrapped his wooden leg, flourished it over his head; then presenting the stump, he flung the wooden leg at the foe. The savage, seeing his companion dead at his feet, and seeing too, as he fancied, a *real* leg coming towards him, stood for a moment panicstruck by this exhibition of witchcraft, and springing out of sight, was seen no more. Peg reached the settlement in safety, with his leg under his arm. The other Indians, he afterwards learned, had been warned by their companion to retire with all speed from the great wizard. Poor Peg-leg! the last time I saw him was at Jack Nolan's the tavern-keeper at Fort Independence. He had come in to sell his skins, and spend his money on drink, as he did every three or four years, for he had no other way of spending it. Banks are few and securities uncertain among the Raphoes and Blackfeet. Peg drank more than he could pay for, and Nolan seized the old horse for the debt, and told its master to die when and where he pleased, but he would get neither liquor nor horse till he paid for both. Alas! there was no trapping at Fort Independence. Peg could as well have paid our national debt. The horse was accordingly locked up in an outhouse, the door being fastened with a huge padlock, the key of which hung as an ornament near Mr. Nolan's bed. Early in the morning Peg rose, stepped a few paces back from the paddock, covered the lock with his rifle, blew it open, limped in, and in a trice was mounted on the old horse. Mr. Nolan, alarmed by the shot, had come out in his night-dress to see what was the matter, but only got a peep of Peg, with his leg projecting like a bowsprit between him and the sky, on the top of a prairie knoll, waving his hand as he and his old horse retired once more to live, and I suppose to die, among the Rocky Mountains."

"What a life!" said I.

"Ah! my friend, you have never tried it. Once begun, it has a charm which acts like spirits to a confirmed drunkard; you may suffer from it, but habit prevents you from giving it up. I begin to fear I myself could never live in the settlements. As for such a man as Peg-leg Smith doing so, you might as well try and get an eagle to strut along the streets of New York."

The last time I saw the merchant was in Liverpool ; and after a long chat he wished to give me, as a parting gift—will the reader guess what ?—a scalp of an Indian whom he had slain in battle. I begged he might not take the trouble of searching for the relic. But a chord had been touched by the very mention of the scalp, and he fell into a reverie, staring at the fire, while he slowly smoked his cigar. At last the puffs of smoke got quicker and quicker, the stern expression came to the eye, till, stamping with one foot on the floor, and clenching his hands, he said with intense energy, “I shall yet do for him !” “For whom ?” I inquired. “That scoundrel Raphoe Indian who shot my brother !” In the rich and populous “settlement” of Liverpool he was dreaming of the Far West, and arranging, in his own mind, for his next attack upon the Raphoes, to revenge the death of a brother whom they had killed.

The last accounts I received of A. S., the merchant of the wilderness, were from an old friend who now resides in Mexico. On asking him whether he had ever heard of such a person, he replied, “He has been well known in Mexico and the Far West for nearly thirty years as a very remarkable, honest, enterprising, and daring man. But I have lost sight of him for years. He returned, I believe, to Germany, after having made money in California, but could not resist the attractions of the wilderness, and so he came back again to the Far West. The last thing I heard about him was an incident very characteristic of the man. A diligence in which he was travelling near Mexico was attacked by a strong party of banditti, and robbed. The only one of the passengers who showed fight was a little, athletic, black-eyed man, who sat on his luggage with a loaded revolver in each hand, gazing with a stern look on the banditti. ‘I know,’ he said, ‘you cowardly scoundrels, that you can kill me and rob me, but not before two of you, at least, are first shot by me, for I never miss. So keep off !’ They did keep off, and the merchant of the wilderness thus saved his life and property. I have not heard of him since.”

Such a strange life of energy and courage is worth knowing about.



A NIGHT IN THE THAMES TUNNEL.

WHILST I was wandering in the Dock region the other day, some boards that were new to me caught my eye—drab boards stuck up here and there, and pointing with a black-seamed drab glove towards the Wapping Station of the East London Railway. I thought I should like to see how the Thames Tunnel looked now that it has been converted into a railway tunnel, and so I obeyed the pointing forefingers. But instead of describing it in its present state, I will rather give a reminiscence of it as it was when I knew it first.

It is no business of anybody's how it was that on the night in question I found myself without a roof to cover me, and with precisely one penny in my pocket. However it came about, that was the fact. On the other side of the world as well as this, I have once or twice found myself wandering at night with even less in my pocket; but, so far as my memory serves, I had never before, and have never since, been left when homeless in possession of that exact amount.

It was in the palisaded path running between the then frozen reservoirs of the Kent Water Company that I found myself, as winter's dusk was changing into winter's darkness, in possession of the capital I have named. As I fingered it in my waistcoat pocket, the thought, keen as the east wind, shot through me, that that was all I had in the world to depend upon for bed and board. If I had had nothing at all, I do not think I should have felt so dismal. *Then* I should have known the worst; but so long as I possessed a penny, I was still a "gentleman of limited means," oppressed with the anxiety of making cash go some way towards satisfying cravings. I wanted something to eat, but I remembered also that I wanted somewhere to sleep. A penny was all that I could make sure of as a provision for the rest of my earthly existence—if it lasted beyond the night; but how could I make that penny supply me with bed and board even for the night? So far as I was aware, the "twopenny rope" of the tramps' lodging-houses in the neighbouring Mill Lane was the cheapest sleeping accommodation that I could procure for money. A penn'orth of food of any kind would be but a mouthful for a hungry man; but if I spent *all* my penny on my supper to-night, what was I to do for a breakfast to-morrow? and, in the meantime, how, under any circumstances, was I to get a night's lodging?


I paced up and down the palisaded path in dire perplexity. The only idea that I could distinctly form was of the inexpressible value of that penny. A hulking tramp reeled out of a public house at the bottom of Ravensbourne Hill, and came along the path on his way to his Mill Lane lodging-house. I envied him, and yet I suspected him. Affluent as were his circumstances, probably, in comparison with mine, he might yet be covetous of my loose cash. I buttoned up my coat to the throat (two more buttons came off as I did so), and prepared to fight to the death for my priceless penny. He merely lurched up against me, however, and then gave me a beer-and-tobacco-scented inverted blessing for getting in his way. He disappeared in the frost-fog that was rising, and I was again left to chew the cud of bitter fancies.

A very unpleasant place that dreary New Town Deptford looked when I followed the tramp over the little waterworks bridge. I did *not* follow him down dark Mill Lane—dark in spite of the tantalizing gleams which some of the lodging-house windows threw out upon the frost-bound roadway. I wandered about in that dim, squalid New Town, which looked as if it had been built seedy ready-made to suit the circumstances of its melancholy inhabitants. Hard up as they were, however, they were better off than I. Their landlords, at any rate, did not mean to turn them out *that* night; I saw blinks of firelight, and women and children coming home from the chandler's with loaves and red herrings, and rashers of bacon partly wrapped up in newspaper. Home! where was *my* home? I had no fire to go to. I could not buy a loaf, and if I bought a roll or a red herring (which I should have had to eat without cooking), my fortune would be squandered.

New Town Deptford soon became *too* oppressive, and I rushed down into the brawling Broadway. The people standing and passing loomed like phantoms through the fog. The street lamps, the shop lamps, the flaring lights of the street-sellers smudged it with bilious blotches. One street-seller, clapping one arm across his breast, was shouting at the top of his voice, as if *that* would warm him, "A penny a lot! a penny a lot!" As I passed him, he pushed into my face a penholder, half a dozen pens, and a pen-wiper. "All that lot for a penny!" he shouted. "If it's the last penny you've got, you'll buy 'em. Blowed if I think you've *got* a penny," he growled, as I hurried past him. I *had* a penny, you know, but I was not going to spend it in that way. I could not eat the pens, and roll myself up in the pen-wiper.

More and more puzzled as to the best mode of investing my large

capital, I plodded on to the New Cross gate, and through it along that dismal Old Kent Road. I had started with a vague intention of walking on to London; but when I reached the canal-bridge, the thought occurred to me that a penny would be of no more use to me in London than elsewhere; and so I turned off from the road, and wandered about purposelessly in the flat region of railway arch, canal, dyke, docks, rope-walk, timber-yard, taverns, tea-gardens, marsh, and market-garden, that lies between Peckham New Town and the river. The black dykes were frozen, or I might have got some nasty duckings, in spite of the warning white finger-posts upon their banks. The moon had come up, and was trying hard to send its light through the frost-fog, but very weak moon-shine-and-vapour was all that it could manage to mix. As I passed the market-gardens, however, I could make out the bony-stalked cabbages wiggled with frozen snow, and in one of the market-gardens I saw an empty market-waggon. I saw also others high piled with cabbages, in readiness for their journey to Covent Garden or Spitalfields in the early morning. The full ones would have been softer to lie on, and more sheltering to lie against; but I knew that I should be disturbed long, long before daybreak if I made my couch in or near one of these, so I scrambled into the empty waggon. I found an old sack in it, and two or three bruised cabbage-leaves. I curled myself up in the sack, in the snuggest corner of the waggon I could find; I munched the bruised cabbage-leaves for my supper (boiled cauliflower-stalk, I think, is as nice as asparagus almost, but I cannot conscientiously recommend uncooked cabbage-leaves), and then I tried hard to go to sleep. I was tired enough, but to sleep I could not get, and presently the faint moonlight faded quite away, and the wind awoke keener than ever, and stinging hail rattled on my face, and thick snow came down in flakes as broad as crown pieces. If I had stayed in it, the waggon would soon have become a white hearse. I had to get up and begin again my weary wanderings. Hither and thither I wandered, half blinded by the snow, and at last found myself stumbling about in the quaint, dark, winding streets of Rotherhithe. It was nearly midnight as I went along one of the narrow little lanes. The lower windows of all the squat houses, except one, were shuttered. I stopped to look into the dimly-lighted little shop window. A bill headed "Drowned—Ten Shillings Reward" lay upon a wooden tray full of marbles. An old man, who had been sitting in a back room smoking over a cheerful little fire, laid down his pipe as I stood looking in, and came through the shop, and up its barge-cabin-like

steps into the street, to close *his* shutter. He eyed me suspiciously as I moved on, and seemed to do all his fastening with anxiously ostentatious care. Very lonely did I feel when I heard his top bolt shot behind me. I was altogether shut out then, in the cold, silent street. The wind had gone down again, but the soft snow was falling faster than ever. I began to think that it was useless for me to walk any farther—that I might as well lie down and let the snow cover me up—but just then, on a board, on which a lamp shone direct, and which the snow had not yet furred, I saw “To the Thames Tunnel. ”

There, at any rate, the snow could not reach me. I hurried on to the Rotherhithe shaft, and invested all my property in the purchase of a night's shelter.

“Bitter weather,” said the old man, who took my penny, blowing on his mittened fingers as I passed through the turnstile. “I wish I was going home, like you.”

Down, down, down the wearisome steps I wound. Three men who were coming up on the other side were very merry, knocking one another's hats off, jumping on one another's backs, and making the shaft echo with the songs they howled. But when I got to the bottom there was perfect silence, except the singing of the gas. The boarded-up right-hand arcade stretched along in mysterious gloom. The left-hand arcade soon ended in mysterious gloom, in spite of the gas-jets that lighted its horseshoe-arched vista.

It was a queer bed-room, but I was most thankful to have reached it. Down there, at first, the air felt quite soft, after the cutting atmosphere from which I had descended. The comparative warmth made me feel sleepy, and I was besides dog-tired; but so long as I thought that there was any chance of anybody passing me, I did not like to lie down. Backwards and forwards between the Surrey and the Middlesex sides I paced, until I thought my feet would drop off at the ankles. When I saw any one coming, I hurried on as if I were as anxious to get out of the Tunnel as they were. Very few people did pass me—not more than three, I think: a thievish-looking young fellow, who scurried along like a scared rat; a drunken man, who did not take the slightest notice of me, but stopped to shake his fist at every gas-burner, and exclaim with sobs, smiling blandly all the while, “Well, really now, I shouldn't ha' thought it!” and a very stout old woman in a pilot jacket, and tugging along something heavy in a fish-basket, who seemed to think that I was a thief, and threatened to knock me down if I offered to molest her.

I suppose it was about two in the morning when I arrived at the conclusion that at last I had the Tunnel to myself, and prepared to turn in.

"The next recess but two I come to I'll take," I said to myself. When I came to it, I was greatly astonished to find that I had *not* the Tunnel to myself—that I must have passed and repassed ever so many times a group there sleeping. Huddled together under an empty stall lay an old woman, a little girl, and a smaller boy. They were pinched and ragged, but somehow they did not look like beggars. If they *had* been beggars, no doubt they would have been enjoying a far more comfortable night's lodging.

"Well," I said to myself, "I fancied that I was the only person in London that would have paid a penny to sleep in the Thames Tunnel, but these poor things have done the same. The old woman can't be fond of gin, or she would have spent the threepence on it, and left the children to shift for themselves as they could."

I had felt quite alone in the world the minute before, but the sight of these three sleepers linked me on to my kind again. They slept so peacefully, too, that I grew ashamed of my gloomy forebodings. There was I, who, at any rate, must be able to do something or other for a living, grizzling, whilst that weak old woman and those two little ones were sleeping as soundly as if they had been lying on a swan's-down bed, beneath an eider-down quilt.

I curled myself up beside my co-mates in subfluvial exile, and once more tried to get to sleep. I chanced to lie down upon the little boy's foot, which he had drawn up under his tattered clothes. He kicked it out, and feeling the cold, began to toss and mutter; but when I had covered it up with the flap of my coat, he gave a sigh of satisfaction, and once more slept soundly. Tired as I was, it was some time, after all, before I could get to sleep. Now that I had got used to the temperature of the Tunnel, and, moreover, had stopped walking, I began to feel very cold again; and then, although, of course, it was *only* fancy, I could not *help* fancying that I heard the water poppling overhead, and speculating as to the possibility of a heavy anchor plumping through our bed-room ceiling, and letting in the Thames upon us. Brick for your sheets, clay for your blankets, and a river for your counterpane, however tired you might be, you would think that a queer bed the first time you tried it.

At last, however, I fell as sound asleep as my curly-headed, bare-footed, little unconscious comrade. I did not feel very grateful to him



when he awoke me about seven by a kick in the cheek. He kicked me back from a delicious dream into a consciousness that I had passed the night in the Tunnel, and that I had not a penny in the world. I started up and stared at him ; he started up and stared at me.

"Granny, here's a man," he shouted, shaking the old woman by the gown. She started up, the little girl started up, and all three of them stared at me.

"Bitter cold, master," said the old woman, shivering, and putting her skinny arms round the youngsters as they snuggled up to her.

If I were "writing a story," I could give you, if not a true, at any rate a full and particular account of my strange bedfellows' reasons for sleeping in the Tunnel; but, as I am only relating an experience, I can merely say that they looked as if they had no one in the world but one another to care for them, and as if they were fond enough of one another not to trouble themselves much about other people's care.

I ought to add that as we four sat up, rubbing our eyes and chatting with clattering teeth, some workmen came along from the Wapping side.

"Poor beggars!" said one of them, as they stopped to look at us; "they look as if it was hard lines with them, Jim. I s'pose that's your mother, young man, and them's your kids? Let's give 'em a breakfast, mates."

And the good fellows subscribed halfpence for our refreshment at the nearest coffee-stall.

I should have liked some warm coffee and thick bread and butter; but, cold and hungry and thirsty though I was, I could not bring myself to diminish my companions' breakfast by taking a share of it. I felt somehow that it would be obtaining charity under false pretences.

But you will understand now how it was that I wanted to see the Thames Tunnel the other day, for the first time since I had slept in it.



THE TWIN CAPTIVES OF GHUZNEE.

"NANOO! Nanoo, what is the delay for? Why do not the servants get up in time? Here it is past daybreak, and nothing ready!" called a youth of about sixteen years of age, coming out into the broken verandah of a half-ruined little temple, some twenty-five miles from Shikarpore on the Beloochee side of the Indus. The old Hindoo servant

was squatting on his haunches by the side of a bullock-hackery a little distance away from the temple where they had spent the previous night, rocking himself to and fro in evident grief, and occasionally calling on all the gods in his system of mythology to help him and his charges out of the serious trouble they had fallen into. It was sunrise; and by this time, had all gone right, they should have been far on the road which they were following westward; while, as it was, there were not even any signs of preparation for the journey, nor had any of the servants been to the temple to call its two occupants. When he heard the lad's voice, Nanoo rose from the ground, folded his arms on his breast in an attitude of supplication, advanced towards the verandah, and with tears in his eyes delivered himself as follows:—

“*Sahib, sahib!* those servants all bad man; they not old servant of the *burra sahib*, your father, or they never run away!”

“Run away!” echoed Henry Merton, with the utmost amazement, “run away! Do you mean to say they have deserted us?”

“When Nanoo woke this morning, *sahib*, all were gone—*syces, hackery-wallahs, dhobies*——” He was going on with the long list of necessary servants accompanying even that small camp, when a sweet voice broke from a little recessed chamber opposite that which Henry had slept in, asking—

“Harry, do I hear right? does Nanoo say our servants have run away?”

“He does indeed, Amy. For goodness’ sake, come out and let us see what it all means.”

“*Né, né, sahib!*” eagerly forbade the old servant, who was of that faithful type—now extinct in India—who remained for a lifetime “true to the salt” of their masters; “*né, sahib*; the *chota-mem-sahib** not come out! *budmashes*† all round, and they must not see. Nanoo come in here and talkee with the *sahib-logue*.”‡ So saying, he wiped his eyes, stepped up into the verandah, and thence into the principal hall of the small temple, whose dilapidated walls had afforded welcome shelter for the night. The “bearer,” for that was the position he held, was followed by Henry, a fine well set-up type of English boyhood, whose light blue eyes, yellow hair, and fair complexion, told of pure Anglo-Saxon blood; and by Amy Merton, whose likeness to her twin brother was most extra-

* Literally, “little Madam Sahib,” but here it simply means Miss or Missy.

† Scoundrels; used to signify enemies.

‡ *Sahib-logue*, i.e., gentlefolk.

ordinary ; in fact, had it not been for the difference in height, the one might readily have been taken for the other. Nor was there very much difference in their characters : thanks to the excellent training they had received in schools in England, they were both truthful, honourable, kind and just ; and though Henry's courage was of the more daring nature that manhood demands, Amy's was not at all to be despised for patient endurance, with a power of hoping on to the very last.

"Well, Nanoo, now just tell us as plainly as you can what all this means? We have no desire, now we have come so far on this wild-goose chase after papa, to turn back——"

"And besides, Nanoo," put in Amy, who did not comprehend, any more than did her brother, the full extent of their misfortune, and could not account for Nanoo's alarm,—“besides, it will surely be easy enough for Henry and you to gallop after them and make the servants come back, won't it?”

But the old man shook his head while declaring that, considering the early hour at which the little camp had retired to rest the previous evening, the runaways had had ample time to be on the other side of the Indus by now, for they had taken horses, camels—all, indeed, except one pair of feeble bullocks to draw the remaining hackery.

"Taken the horses and camels!" cried the twins in a breath ; "how on earth, then, are we to get either on or back?"

"Nanoo cannot tell ; these fellows great big coward and 'fraid of Beloochees, I think," said the old man, looking anxiously at Amy ; "plenty of *budmashes* round, and the *chota-mem-sahib* must not be seen."

"Oh, that's nonsense, Nanoo ; we must make a start," said the spirited girl ; "and I think we should lose no time in setting out to return to Shikarpore."

"But how can you travel, Amy?" asked Henry, who now began to appreciate the difficulty of their position.

"Oh, I can travel as well as you nearly ; besides, if I get tired I can have a lift in the bullock-hackery."

"*Sahib*," said Nanoo, decisively, "'fore we do anything, the *mem-sahib* must change she dress!"

"What do you mean, Nanoo?" asked Amy, alarmed at the tone in which he spoke.

"Must put on some of *sahib's* clothes ; must burn own clothes, and be boy till we 'rive at Shikarpore."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried the brother and sister.

"*Né, né*—no nonsense," persisted the old man, whose face was a perfect picture of anxiety; "dese servant not run 'way, only dey know *budmashes* around—plenty *budmashes*—the *mem-sahib* must do what Nanoo say—*budmask* may catch us, den dey run away with *chota-mem-sahib*, and we see no more!"

Amy shuddered all over as the servant made this very serious suggestion, while Henry was in a greater state of perplexity than ever. Telling Nanoo to remain where he was, he withdrew his sister into the tumbledown chamber he had occupied during the night, and there the twins consulted briefly, but most anxiously, on the advisability, or otherwise, of Amy's taking the advice so urgently given by the old servant. Their position was one of great doubt and uncertainty—had been so, in fact, ever since they had landed in Calcutta some months previously, and a brief statement of what it exactly was may not be here out of place. Their father was a widowed officer of Engineers. At the time of their expected arrival in India, he was hastily summoned from the remote out-station, where he had been engaged (entirely alone as regarded other Europeans) on public works, to join the Governor-General at Simla, and had sent Nanoo down the Ganges, with ample funds, to meet his beloved children in Calcutta, and escort them up country. Soon after the servant had started Lieutenant Merton was suddenly ordered away to join a corps of observation on the frontier, thence he was detached on special duty connected with the survey of routes for an army about to advance to cripple the power of Dost Mahomed, who had seized the throne of Caubul from Shah-Soojah, an ally of Great Britain; next Merton was ordered to join the Bombay force on their way northward; soon he was re-transferred to the Bengal troops; and the result of all this was that, in those days of most feeble postal arrangements and great difficulty of road communication, Nanoo and the twins lost all exact trace of Lieutenant Merton; had missed altogether the written instructions which he had left for them to proceed to Simla until the conclusion of the war, and were now, March, 1839, in hot pursuit of the army, under the command of Sir John Keane, advancing through Beloochistan towards the Affghan country, in hopes of finding their father with it. For many days they had been travelling down the Sutlej, following the track the Bengal force had taken, every day gaining a little on the army, until Nanoo's supply of money began to run short, and they were compelled to travel at less speed, for fear of knocking up their baggage animals altogether. The servants, with the exception of the faithful Nanoo, who had been with Lieutenant Merton

from the day of his landing as a cadet in India, were all strangers picked up just for the journey, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they had been persuaded to cross the Indus at all. Nanoo had, however, stimulated them with promises of extra pay, as well as false news of the proximity of the little party to the army, so that, until they passed through Shikarpore, all went tolerably well. Then these menials grew more and more discontented; they began to express doubts of ever catching up the troops; fear of the Beloochees, a wild, fierce, and most warlike race, drove them nearly crazy with terror; and the result was that, on the night in question, they had, during Nanoo's deep sleep (a sleep that the old man now suspected had been induced by the mixing of opium with his tobacco), possessed themselves of all the swiftest animals to make the best of their way to their own side of the Indus.

Henry and Amy Merton had, of course, very little practical acquaintance with Indian life; but the knowledge they had acquired from books, from friends who had called to see them when "on leave" to England, as well as from letters their father had written with a view to their instruction in Eastern habits, proved amply sufficient to convince them, now that they looked the matter in the face, of the wisdom of old Nanoo's suggestion regarding Amy's adopting the costume and clothes of a boy. They were in a wild and hostile country; they were certainly two, if not three, marches in rear of the army; the Beloochees were swarming all round that army, with a view to plunder; and to make a captive of an English girl would be esteemed a crowning honour by even the highest of the Belooch chieftains. In the face of these dangers it would have been simple folly for Amy to retain her own dress, and old Nanoo was delighted when Henry Merton announced to him that they had determined to take his advice.

"*Sahib*, make no delay," warned the old man; "me see strange mans gallop pass rocks dere; dey may ride up quick, and den where *mem-sahib* be?" He pointed out to Henry where some spear-heads could be plainly seen shining in the distance; and the brother at once ran in, placed the smallest suit of clothes in his possession in the recess occupied by Amy, and persuaded her to put them on at once, and afterwards, if she liked, attempt to shorten and take them in by degrees. In a very few minutes she had obeyed him, and Henry, at Nanoo's earnest request, took every article of female attire she was possessed of and burnt them to ashes in the compound where their camp-fire was. One step more had to be taken; it was a painful one, but the old man would take no

denial—the cutting off of Amy's beautiful golden locks. It went to Henry's heart to have thus to mutilate his sister's beauty ; but there was no help for it, so he set to work and soon cut her copious crop of hair down to the dimensions of his own. It was carefully swept up and at once burnt, and that done, Amy stepped forth into the verandah an exact counterpart of her brother in every respect save height alone. Nanoo was delighted with the result of the operation, declaring that now "no bad *budmash* know de *chola-mem-sahib* was not Henry *sahib's* young broder !" Henry and Amy were also both well satisfied now the change was an accomplished fact ; they felt more assured on the point of personal safety, while the mind of Henry was freed from the very serious apprehensions with which Nanoo's words had inspired it.

Nor had they long to wait to see the wisdom of their conduct in the matter ; for after a rude breakfast which the old man hastily prepared, and when they were anxiously arranging for their immediate retreat on Shikarpore—for they soon saw that to advance farther with their crippled resources would be mere madness—a number of mounted Beloochees began to cluster round the little temple, and, safe out of gunshot, eagerly examine into the probable strength of the party it sheltered. When they had satisfied themselves that no resistance was to be anticipated, they came galloping up, with much whooping and brandishing of their arms, held a brief parley with the weeping Nanoo (who feared every moment that his throat would be cut), and captured the little party. Henry was in a terrible state of mind : he could do absolutely nothing to defend his sister ; and he plainly foresaw that, even if their lives were spared, there would be the greatest difficulty in preserving the secret of his sister's sex for any great length of time, more especially if they should be subjected, as was only too probable, to the scrutiny of the women of the wild tribe that had taken them prisoners. Amy, through ignorance, did not share his fears in so great a degree ; she felt tolerably satisfied with her disguise, for Nanoo had made them both put ashes and dust on their faces, hands, and heads, to render them more repulsive ; and, besides, she was of a more hopeful nature than her brother, and felt little doubt that her enemies would release them in contempt when they found that their capture consisted only of two boys and an old man. She was wrong, however, for the leader of the Beloochees, who seemed to be a man of some note, after questioning Nanoo closely, without, however, extracting much information of a truthful nature, declared that the boys would make a suitable present to the great usurping chief Dost Mahomed, to whose *suite* a couple

of white slaves would be a welcome ornament. Amidst loud wailings and tears on both sides, Nanoo was separated from his youthful charges, and driven away from the temple; the hackery, bullocks, and general baggage, after being rifled in search of valuables, were handed over as a prize to some villagers who had come up; and the two Mertons were placed on spare horses in the centre of the troop, which at once commenced its march in a northerly direction; Henry's personal clothing, which was, of course, supposed to belong to both, being the only articles carried away from the temple. With a loud shriek, poor old Nanoo fell prostrate on the ground, when he witnessed his charges being thus borne away into captivity; Amy could not resist the faithful servant's heart-broken cry: she struggled violently to free herself, and screamed wildly with a sudden access of terror; Henry dashed his horse close beside hers with a vain idea of rescuing her there and then; but the Beloochees, conscious of power, took the efforts of both sister and brother very coolly, and with a few quiet yet determined motions, clearly proved to both the utter futility of their endeavours. In less than half an hour the party had ridden clean out of sight, and old Nanoo, desolate and weighed down with misery, crawled into the temple, perfectly careless of what should become of him.

To follow the further wanderings of the Mertons and their captors would occupy far more space than can be spared, and therefore I must content myself with telling that the twins were passed, by forced marches and through wild tracks only known to the half-savage inhabitants, over or rather through the Suliman Mountains, until they reached the frontier of Afghanistan, where they were handed over to a guard of Affghans and transmitted to Ghuznee as a present to the usurper, Dost Mahomed. The sufferings they endured in their fearful and most rapid march can never be known now, but some estimate of them may be formed when it is known that the district they traversed is almost a pathless waste, quite impassable for Europeans under ordinary circumstances, and that they performed the journey from Shikarpore (near which they were captured) to Ghuznee in about three weeks, while the British army took considerably more than the same number of months between the two places, travelling, however, by a very different route.

Arrived in Ghuznee, it was found that Dost Mahomed was not there; but his son, who was ruling in the city as his father's Viceroy, had the *living presents* brought before him, and, noticing their worn and haggard demeanour after the intense hardships they had gone through, ordered

them to be detained and taken every care of, until they were in a fit and proper state to be presented to his father. They were accordingly handed over to one of the palace servants—Meer Sooltan by name—who took them to his own house, where they were attended to with the utmost care; while their worn and scanty rags (the spare clothes belonging to Henry had been lost in the mountains) were replaced with Affghan garments of fine texture. The change, besides making them more comfortable, increased the safety of their secret; for in the new dress Amy looked more like a boy than ever, and so far all was well. With fair food, rest, and suitable clothing, the twins gradually regained health and good looks, and their spirits would likewise have improved but for two things—the separation from their father, and the fact that they were prisoners, slaves, and would probably remain in that abject condition all their lives.

“Why should Allah take the trouble,” ask the Affghans, when speaking of this most ancient city, “to send the wicked to Jehanum when there is Ghizni ready-made to His hand?” And the truth contained in the singular question became very apparent to the unfortunate Mertons before long. In winter and early spring the cold in this far-famed and at one time deemed impregnable city is most intense, the snow lies six or seven feet deep in the narrow streets and byeways of the town, the frost is far more severe than as a rule we experience it in England, and the inhabitants rarely stir out of doors except on the most urgent necessity. Then the warm weather sets in with a rapidity of change which the peoples of more temperate climes can hardly imagine, vegetation of the most gorgeous and luxuriant nature springs into being almost like magic, and the heat becomes almost unbearable.

While the weather was cold the twins suffered very much from its inclemency, but with the approach of the warm season their sufferings, though of a totally different nature, became far greater.

“I cannot bear it much longer, Amy,” said Henry one day in the very middle of summer, as he lay panting and gasping in the quivering heat of the small apartment they called their own, “I cannot stand it. I am absolutely smothering!”

The girl, in the sweet love and unselfishness of her heart, rose from the cushions on which she reclined, and took a palm-leaf fan with which to cool the fevered brows of her brother.

“Poor Harry!” she said, soothingly, “I pray to Heaven every day that we may be released from this bondage before your health be quite ruined. Surely the good God will not desert us in our sore need?”

"Amy, we *are* deserted; there is no——"

"Hush, hush, Harry! in mercy's sake don't say those awful things! We are not, never shall be deserted as long as we put our trust in God. We must not despair. Perhaps this is only a trial to see how steady is our faith. *I* do not—no, never for a moment—despair; nor must you, my own darling brother. Let us hope on to the end, and if the worst comes to the worst, and we are——"

"Separated?" gloomily interrupted Henry.

Amy shuddered all over like one in a fit.

"No, not separated, Harry," she whispered, as if the notion was too painful to be spoken of aloud; "I do not think I could live to bear *that*; I meant if we were killed, even then our hope would not have been lost, for it would have supported us like true Christians—like true English."

"If we are to be killed, they had better look sharp about it; I, for one, shall not last very long, penned up in this fearful oven all day. I cannot rest a moment in the day, I never close my eyes in the stifling furnace-like heat of the night. I shall die or—go mad!"

He cried out the last words with fearful emphasis, and Amy in wild terror that his words were, there and then, becoming true, broke down completely, and wept as if her heart was breaking. Her great misery woke Henry from the selfishness he was indulging in: with an immense effort he threw it from him; and soothing the weeping girl's hot brow with his hand, he said,—

"Oh, Amy! forgive me! I hardly knew what I was saying with this burning fever raging in my veins; pardon me this time, Amy, and I will never again give way."

His accents were so imploring, his grief so thoroughly genuine, and there now sparkled from his eyes such a flash of the true courage Amy knew he possessed, that she could not but turn round and kiss him, while she whispered through her tears,—

"Hope, Harry; let us *always* hope, and our sufferings will come much lighter. Who knows but that we may be freed by the army papa is with?"

"Amy, there is no chance of that. Even supposing they were advancing here—and we have good reason to know they are not—we should be sent away to—to our *master* long before they arrived——"

"Now, Harry, I will hear no more of that. 'Hope' is my watchword! and hope on I will to my latest breath."

Just then Meer Sooltan, who rarely allowed any one save himself to enter their little stifling chamber, came in to inquire if they wanted any-

thing. Amy, emboldened by her own recent words, asked their jailor if they could not be allowed to go out to some garden or place where there would be a cooler air ; or at least be transferred to a loftier, larger, and more appropriate apartment. She said that her brother was suffering severely from fever, and that if something was not done at once he might die. Meer Sooltan gravely nodded his head, and saying he would see to the matter, left the room.

"Harry, we shall have what I asked. I feel sure we shall. 'Hope' will not disappoint me."

But her brother only smiled languidly as he said, "Well, Amy, 'hope' us into better quarters, and I shall believe you to be a prophetess."

Amy was right ; that evening they were transferred to a cool summer residence on the ramparts commanding the gate of the city leading out northwards to Caubul. From their new quarters they had a splendid view over the *maidaun* surrounding the city ; the rooms were large, lofty, and deliciously fresh, after the close confinement of their former one little poky hole. Still their position could be nothing but a very sad one, and it was rendered all the more depressing from the torturing uncertainty as to what was to eventually become of them. The son of Dost Mahomed had at first sent for them at certain intervals to satisfy himself that they were being well treated, so that they might present a good appearance when forwarded to his father ; but of late he seemed to have forgotten all about them ; and Meer Sooltan more than hinted, on one or two occasions, that they might possibly become his own private property in the lapse of time. To this end he suffered no living being whatsoever to approach them since they had been in their new abode,—attending to their wants entirely himself, and carefully locking, bolting, and barring them in when he took his departure for the night. Loophole of escape left he none, unless, indeed, they chose to attempt a descent of the rampart ; but as that was of immense depth, while the broad and unfordable ditch of the fortress washed its feet below, Meer Sooltan was right in fancying that his youthful prisoners were quite secure.

One morning—as well as Amy's reckoning could be relied upon, it was Sunday, the 21st of July—the twins were startled by the sound of distant firing ; then the sounds appeared closer ; next they heard the roar of artillery, but still at a great distance off ; and their hearts bounded with a great hope that the English army was approaching. It was dusk before Meer Sooltan visited them ; he seemed anxious and harassed, but nothing could be extracted from him save the remark that some rebels from the

hills had been beaten away from the gates. The next day, what was their delight, and astonishment too, to see a very small body of English soldiers evidently making a *reconnaissance*! But their disappointment was equally great to see them retreat without accomplishing anything, or even coming within signalling distance of the ramparts. At three o'clock the following morning they were flung out of their beds by a fearful explosion. The walls of the house shook as though they would topple over; the loose stones on the ramparts plunged into the ditch below; and well might Amy be excused for screaming out in dread horror that the end of the world was come! A deafening roar of guns followed the explosion, succeeded by volley after volley of musketry. "Blue lights" of great strength were hung out by the Affghans near the Caubul Gate, which had been (as the twins subsequently ascertained) blown down by the explosion that had nearly laid their residence in ruins; and by the glare, as strong as day, thus artificially produced, could be seen a strong column of English rushing for the gap in the defences. A fearful struggle ensued almost under their very eyes; the roaring of the cannon, the unceasing rattle of the musketry, the loud cries of the combatants under the gateway, where a fearful carnage was taking place, mingled with the fearful shrieks of the wounded, and made up such a terrible din as neither of the Mertons had ever before imagined possible. They were both in the most fearful state of excitement, trying their utmost, but in vain, to attract attention to the barred window where they stood screaming and waving white clothes, when the doors of their apartments were suddenly flung open, and Meer Sooltan, armed to the teeth, covered with grime, blood, and filth, entered savagely. He knocked Henry senseless with a blow from the butt of his huge pistol, then seized Amy by the neck, while a sinewy Ethiopian slave caught hold of her brother, and the two were dragged down to the level of the streets, and out into a narrow lane leading upwards to the citadel. The fresh air revived Henry, and brother and sister staggered on in perfect silence, a pistol being held close to the ear of each; while the turmoil of battle grew fainter, either because they were leaving its neighbourhood, or because it really was diminishing. The latter was the truth; for, strange as it may appear, the celebrated storming of Ghuznee took exactly two hours, no more and no less, from the time the Caubul Gate was blown in, until the British flag flew triumphant over the citadel. But as the firing of cannon diminished in vigour, so did the speed of Meer Sooltan and the slave increase. They took narrow and unfrequented paths in which they scarce met a soul (for all

were gone to defend the main streets), and traversed the entire breadth of the town, until at last a halt was made in front of a miserable-looking deserted house, with a sort of yard, in which were a few rude country



carts and bullocks standing, surrounding it. Unlocking a door, the captives were thrust in head foremost, and the rest of the day was spent in a dark cell, in the utmost anguish of mind, and with an ever-present torturing despair of being found by their countrymen and restored to

dear liberty—a liberty that had seemed almost within their grasp, and now was as far from them as ever! They could hear nothing going on; they knew not if their countrymen had been ultimately successful or not; while time—such was the agonizing suspense they suffered from—appeared to pass so slowly as to change minutes into hours.

Towards night, as well as they could guess (for the darkness of the cell was complete) the negro flung in some coarse bread, placed a pitcher of water on the filthy floor, and retired without a word. Another fearful time then ensued; hours and hours and hours seemed to have passed away, when at last the door was opened, and Meer Sooltan, in the garb of a common peasant, and without arms, entered with a torch; while the black, with great dexterity and apparent delight in his task, bound the legs and arms of the twins, and then proceeded to gag them so scientifically, that, while able to breathe tolerably well, they were totally unable to utter a sound. They were then carried out into the yard (when they perceived the sun had just risen), were skilfully placed under some packages of light merchandise (half supported on bamboo cross-rests) in a bullock-gharry, which Meer Sooltan mounted and drove calmly out into the lane, the slave bidding him good bye and a safe journey.

Tightly bound and gagged though they were, the Mertons were not absolutely uncomfortable: the bottom of the gharry was covered with a few sheep-skins; the packages concealing them were for the most part upheld on the bamboos; and the back of the cart, towards which their heads were laid, was taken out so as to admit of air and a tolerable view of all they passed. In fact, so cleverly had the affair been managed, that the health of the bound ones was amply provided for, while the security of their persons was absolute so long as the well-knotted thongs held fast.

So confident was the disguised Meer Sooltan in the security of his captives, that he drove his bullocks with the utmost carelessness through the principal streets of the city, stopping here to exchange a few words of gossip with a neighbour; there, to ask advice as to the roads from other travellers; anon, to stare at the British guards who were picketed every here and there; and again to purchase the sweetmeats and fruits which an Affghan so dearly loves. But whatever his real motive was, his *insouciance* was amply rewarded; the English could have no suspicion of a countryman dawdling with his goods, through curiosity, right in their midst; so that instead of stopping and examining his cart, they actually rebuked him for his tardiness, and even hastened the speed of his bullocks every now and then by a slight prick from a bayonet.

Fancy the agony and horror of his young captives as they heard all, and saw the greater portion of this ! Absolutely passing within touch of their countrymen, and yet utterly unable by motion, sound, or gesture, to attract the slightest observation that might tend towards their liberty. Shouted at for a lazy sluggard, Meer Sooltan was hurried by the English guard out of the southern gate of the city ; and as he prodded his bullocks on to the *maidaun*, and at last urged them into something like a trot, all hope died in Henry Merton's heart, and he felt that the last chance of liberty was gone from them for ever.

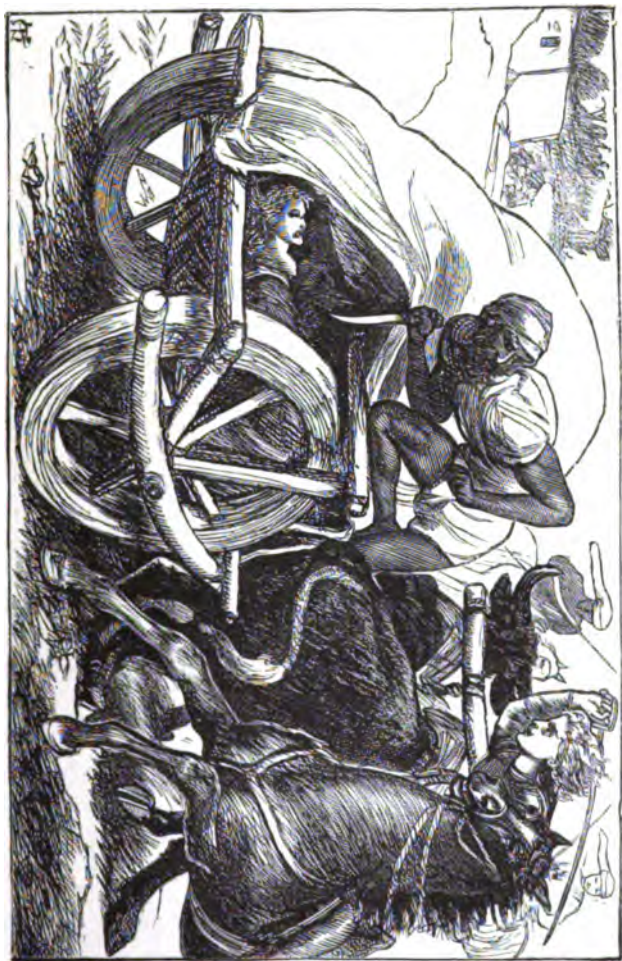
Not so Amy. From the very moment that she had been tied down full length by the side of her brother, she had been unceasingly working her jaws to strain her gag—if only ever so little—to enable her to call out for assistance. All the way through the crowded streets had she worked, till her cheeks were cut and bleeding, and her gums were a mass of self-inflicted tooth-wounds. A constant, never-ceasing drop will wear away a stone : so it was with Amy's gag. By the time they were about a quarter of a mile from the last guard, she had actually widened the gag so much that she could get at it readily with her teeth. A few more efforts and she succeeded in biting it through ; and it fell from her bleeding lips as she most cautiously turned round towards her brother, who saw what she had done. He shuddered when he saw all the lower part of her face streaming with blood ; but when she breathed a whisper to him to slip up his hands as much as possible for her to bite them through, he shook his head and frowned disapproval, while he tried to intimate that she should continue to work at her own bonds, and thus become free.

"No, no," she whispered, "no chance, too weak ; see, there are English Lancers about, let me free you, and you can perhaps escape to them."

Again he vehemently signified refusal ; but again she told him that it would be hopeless for her to attempt to run fast enough to reach them, while he *might* possibly do so, and thus call assistance that would give them both their liberty. For a long time he refused, and would insist on her looking to herself only ; but when she whispered that they would soon be out of reach of the soldiers, as Meer Sooltan was now driving very fast over the rugged plain, and that it would be quite out of the question for *both* of them to slip down without the bundles over them sinking and thus attracting the attention of their captor, he consented, and held up his wrists for her to gnaw at with her poor wounded mouth.

In time, only a very brief time too, but it seemed ages to both of them, she succeeded in gnawing through the tough leathern thongs; then Henry, with the utmost caution, and taking advantage of every jolt of the hackery over the rugged way, managed to get his feet close up to her mouth, and in due course she bit away the tough bonds that held them also, and her brother was mouth and limb free. Pressing a burning kiss on the bleeding lips that had worked so self-devotedly, the brother waited until the cart gave a tremendous jolt over a stone, requiring all Meer Sooltan's skill to keep the bullocks from toppling over, slipped out of the open bottom of the cart, while Amy wriggled crossways so as to support the entire weight of the goods on top of her, and at once disappeared behind a mound of rock and scrub. Oh, how poor Amy's heart beat when she lost sight of him! It was a terrible risk to run, that of being left alone in such a fearful captivity, but the brave girl thought hardly at all for herself: all her anxiety was for the safety of that darling brother.

As soon as the hackery passed on Henry looked round him, and his heart jumped almost into his mouth when he saw, apparently about half a mile off, a *vedette* of the English Lancers. Immediately he set off running in the direction. He dared not call out, but the soldier was gazing at some object on the opposite side, and it was not until the lad was within a few yards of him that he turned with a start, and placed his lance in rest, to resist the attack of one whom he imagined to be an Affghan fanatic rushing to the attack. "A friend! a friend! for God's sake help me! I'm English!" shouted the boy as he gained the horse's side. A few seconds sufficed to give the soldier an idea of what was wanted; he raised his lance and waved it wildly towards his comrades, some of whom instantly spurred up to join him; while Henry implored one of them to dismount, lend him his horse and sword, so that he might be on the spot to rescue his sister. The good-natured fellow consented; Henry hastily buckled on the heavy sabre, jumped into the saddle, joined the others, who were advancing on the hackery at a rapid pace, and began to feel that at last there was a chance of salvation for both of them. In a very brief time they had come up parallel with the vehicle. The leader counselled their getting in advance of it, lest if Sooltan saw them following he might suspect something, examine his cargo, and murder the girl in revenge. Then they made for a *tope* of trees, which they were fortunate enough to get round without being observed, and placing the lad behind them in order that his dress might not be recognized, they



advanced towards the hackery as if they were a scouting party returning to Ghuznee from a *reconnaissance*. But when they got within a short distance of Meer Sooltan, the sharp scoundrel detected Henry Merton's Affghan disguise. Quick as thought he jumped off his cart, with a loud cry of treachery, seized from under his seat a sharp-edged *tulwar*,* and rushed to the back. "Forward!" shouted the leader, clapping spurs to his horse on the first suspicious movement of Sooltan; but quick as he was, the brother was quicker; his light weight was nothing on the fine troop-horse that carried him; he dashed far ahead of the Lancers, and just as the brutal Meer Sooltan had raised his *tulwar* to murder Amy—in the fearful revenge of his heart at being outwitted—he was cut to the ground by Henry Merton, and the captives of Ghuznee were saved. The first Lancer who came up drove his spear through the Affghan as he lay on the ground, thus giving the *coup de grâce* to one who deserved no better. Henry jumped off his horse to free his sister, and in a few seconds she was in his arms, and folded to his heart.

There is little more to tell. The strangely-recovered pair were escorted back to Ghuznee by the Lancers, were then handed over to the main guard, and in another hour were claimed by their father, who formed one of the invading force, and who welcomed his children as only a father can, after such a time of peril and danger. In his tent, too, they found the faithful Nanoo, who had travelled day and night until he overtook the army, and told the father all that had happened. Lieutenant Merton, before the army moved forward, was ordered to return to Hindostan; his children, and Nanoo, of course, went with him, and there their adventures came to a happy termination.



A FIGHT BETWEEN A HORSE AND A TIGER.

WE are so completely in the habit of regarding the horse as a docile slave, expected to minister to our necessities with uncomplaining complaisance,—unresisting generally under ill treatment, often half killing himself by struggling to drag loads beyond his powers, that we are apt to

* *Tulwar*, i.e., native sword of excellent temper and edge.

forget the tremendous strength which he can exert if he pleases to put it forth.

I saw lately a small pony running away with a little carriage, in which were two large strong men ; one sat in his place dragging at the reins with all his might, the other was on his knees, adding his utmost power nearer the head, but in vain. They were just able to give some sort of direction to their course, so as to avoid the carts and carriages, which fortunately were not many, and in turning several sharp corners, but they could not moderate the pace in the least, till it pleased the pony to stop at the door of his own stable. They set their strength against his, and on the tenderest point, the mouth, and the pony won.

The great dray-horses of a London brewery are almost like elephants in weight and power, yet are so good-tempered that they can be guided by a child. The strength of the neck, of the heels, of the teeth of such a beast is fearful indeed, if it were used against, instead of for, the service of man, and it may help us to treat him with greater respect to hear how powerful, and, at times, how savage an animal a horse can be. We have much to learn in our treatment of him. An Arab will make his mare go far longer distances without suffering than we can our English horses. In South America the "topping merchant" of Santiago used always to have at hand horses which could be ridden to Valparaiso, some ninety-odd miles, and back next day, with no food but hay and a little chopped straw. The Hanoverian troopers in the Peninsular War were able to keep their chargers in good condition, while those of many of the English cavalry regiments were dying by wholesale. The Germans were more kindly anxious for the welfare of their rough ugly beasts than the English "horse-subduers," as they count themselves, were of their far superior animals. We shut them up in stifling dark stables, with no fresh air, and with abominable smells, while they are by nature hardy creatures, belonging to temperate climates, and used to exposure. It has been found that the mortality in some of the great cavalry stables in London has been diminished very greatly by admitting more air and light.

The courage which horses will show in a charge during a battle ; the temper when in a mob (the good-natured giants of the Household Brigade back their horses, so as to disperse a crowd by mere force of the terror of their heels or the switching of their tails, without doing any harm to man, woman, or child) ; the intelligence with which a horse, who is set to move whole lines of trucks and carriages at a railway station, understands the complicated commands made to him by word and sign, all

show powers and qualities of which at present we make but very indifferent use.

A curious proof of the courage and strength of the horse is to be found in a book some twenty years old, by a Mr. Knighton, an Englishman, who was in the service of the King of Oude in 1835. He tells the following story of what he himself once witnessed at Lucknow.

The King, whom he calls "a sensual, cruel savage," kept many wild beasts, which he sometimes set to fight with each other, as in the Roman games.

One day Mr. Knighton was driving from the River Goomtee to one of the palaces in a sort of little open gig. As they passed along the streets there was not a creature to be seen; if any one came in sight, they were rushing hurriedly off. Presently he saw in the middle of the road a trampled bloody heap. He stopped: it was the corpse of a woman, terribly lacerated and torn, the face crushed by teeth into a shapeless mass, the long matted hair clotted with blood.

Such was the capricious tyranny of the King, that Mr. Knighton was hardly surprised. "It was probably some execution," he whispered to his companion. On they drove: there were still no signs of any inhabitants to be seen; the houses were everywhere closed, a sort of breathless terror seemed to reign in the city. Presently they came to the body of a lad similarly mangled, lying by the side of the road, and they stopped once more. On the top of an adjoining house they saw one of the King's troopers looking intently up the street.

"What is the matter?" said Mr. Knighton.

"The man-eater is loose, *wallah!* Look out, *sahibs*, he is quite wild to-day."

I had heard (continues Mr. Knighton) of a savage horse belonging to one of the troopers, who was called Kunewallah, because he had destroyed many men.

"He is coming, he is coming!" shouted the man suddenly from the house-top; "take care, take care!"

Far down the road we could see the wild brute, a large bay horse, savagely shaking a child which he had seized in his jaws, and evidently coming our way.

In another moment he had seen the carriage, thrown down the child on the road, dead no doubt, and rushed forward furiously to attack us. We turned, our horse almost unmanageable with terror, and drove on at a mad gallop towards a sort of yard which was closed in by strong gates.

We could hear the iron hoofs of the man-eater clattering over the road in the silent street, as he pursued us at break-neck speed.

We gained the enclosure, and drove within the doors, which were luckily open. I jumped out and threw back the gate, which fortunately shut with a heavy iron bolt into a socket. As it fell in, the man-eater came thundering up, his head and cheeks covered with blood, his jaws streaming with the recent slaughter of his victims. He stood looking savagely through the rails, with cocked ears, distended nostrils, and glaring eyeballs, a ferocious-looking monster. Our horse trembled from head to foot as if he were shivering with cold; the man-eater glared at us through the bars, walked round to try and find an opening, but it was all hard iron railing. Satisfied that he was baffled, he turned round, rattled his iron heels against the bars, and with head and tail erect and cocked ears, galloped off down the road. Later in the day we heard that the trooper had contrived to let fall a noose over his head, he had been upset, muzzled, and taken back to his stable.

I mentioned what I had seen to the King when I came to him shortly after. "He is as savage a wild beast as a tiger," said I.

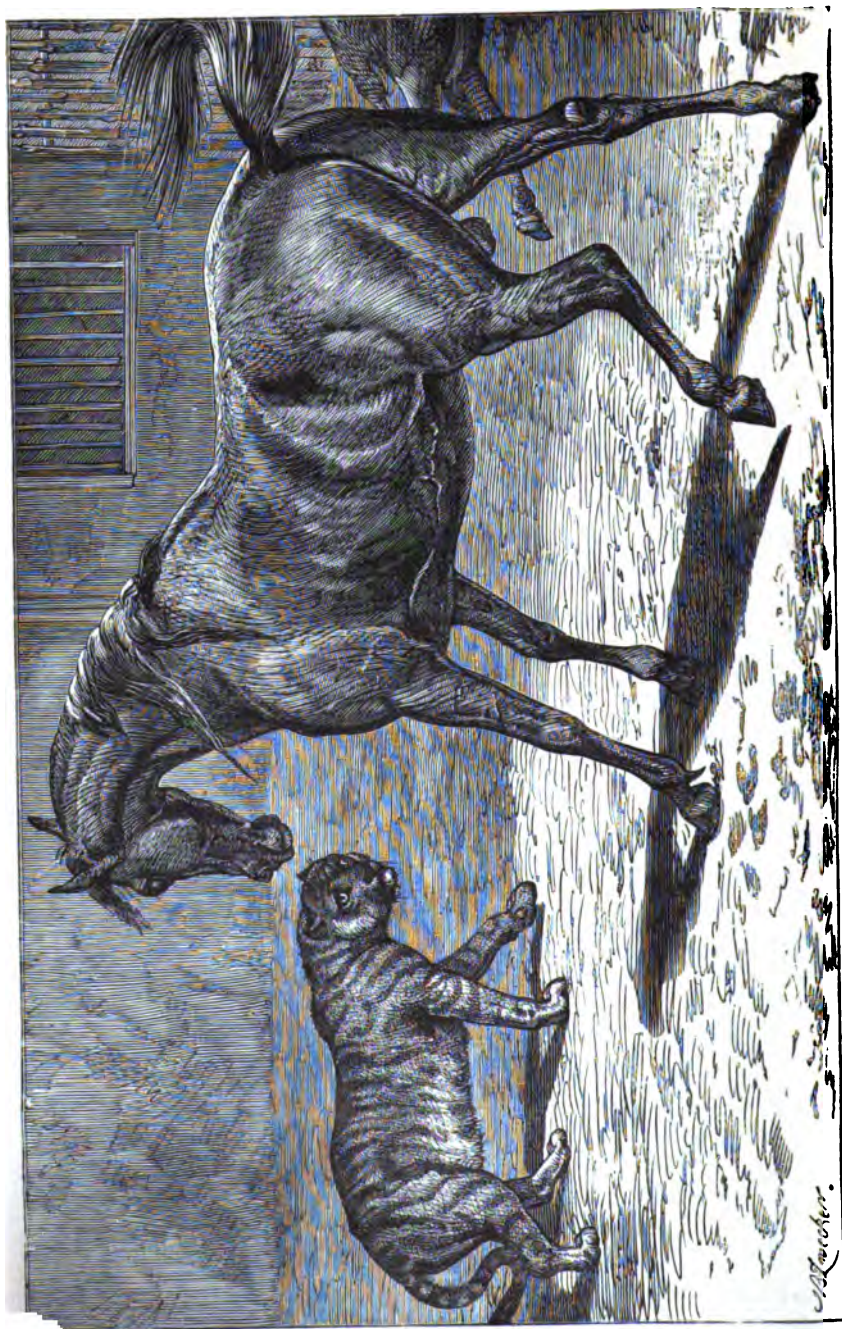
The King laughed. "Then he shall fight the tiger Burrhea," so called after the name of a village at the foot of the Himalaya, from which the animal had been brought.

There was a courtyard in the palace about sixty yards square, surrounded by thick bamboo railings on two sides; on the third was a gallery, in which the King sat, surrounded by male and female slaves fanning him with peacock fans. The man-eater was lured on into the yard after a little mare of whom he was fond; and the tiger, who was without food or drink, was let loose into the enclosure.

The horse stood in an easy attitude, with one foot advanced, awaiting the attack, moving as Burrhea moved, with his eyes fixed on the eyes of his enemy. Suddenly, with a light bound, Burrhea was upon the mare: with one blow of his paw he threw her over, his teeth fastened in her neck, he drank her blood, enjoying his draught, but his eyes fixed meantime all the while on the man-eater, who, his neck protruded, cocked ears, glaring eyeballs, and twitching tail, watched his enemy intently in an easy attitude of attention.

At length the tiger began to move stealthily round the courtyard, like a cat, quite noiselessly, the soft balls of the large paws put slowly down, the long lithe back working as he went.

In the middle stood the horse, slowly turning as the tiger turned, the



head, ears, and neck bent forward, while on stole the tiger ; not a sound was heard, every one was in mute expectation ; at last the tiger bounded like lightning, intending to seize his enemy by the head, but the horse dived aside a little, and received his antagonist on the haunches ; the claws sank deep into the flesh, while the hind feet of the tiger made a grasp at the fore legs of the horse. Suddenly the man-eater lashed out with his iron heels, and in a moment Burrhea was sprawling on his back ; he was up again, however, immediately, and stealing round once more, as if nothing were the matter. Noiselessly round and round he went, his broad head always turned to his wary foe, while the horse, though his haunches were bleeding and lacerated, with an indignant snort resumed his former position, his head and neck lowered and protruding, one foot still out to admit of that rapid dive and thrust by which he turned his enemy's flank. This monotonous circling went on for eight or ten minutes, or even more, the man-eater ever facing him, and snorting angrily from time to time. Once the tiger paused by the dead mare as if to eat it, then, suddenly, without the smallest growl or preparation, he sprang again, as if lifted by galvanism in the course of this monotonous gyration. Kunewallah was, however, not taken by surprise ; his head ducked again, and again he received the tiger on his haunches. We could see the broad round head for an instant near the tail of the horse, while his hind claws reached to the breast ; his body was quivering uneasily, with the belly nearly on the horse's back ; it was only, however, for an instant. Again the ferocious beast lashed out with his hind legs, almost as if he would throw himself on his side, and his iron heels came against the tiger's jaws, as he fell sprawling on his back. He soon rose again, but now only to try and escape : his jaw was broken, and, with his tail between his legs, he cried out loudly with pain, like a whipped spaniel. The man-eater watched him narrowly, thinking it might be only a *ruse*. Now the King ordered the door of the cage to be opened, and Burrhea rushed into its shelter, evidently having had quite enough.

Proudly then the man-eater snorted and pawed ; he scampered up to the mare, spurned her with his foot, then, with his head aloft and tail arched, he trotted round, trying to get at the attendant servants : his blood was up, and, tiger or man, it was evident he did not mind any of them.

"Let another tiger be set at him," cried the King ; "I will have my revenge for Burrhea !"

The keeper of the tigers was summoned, and came in salaaming in

fear. "May it please your Majesty's greatness, the tigers were fed two hours ago."

"And why were they fed two hours ago, you scoundrel?" shouted the King.

"May it please the royal greatness of your Majesty, it was the usual time," said the poor man, salaaming again, and trembling in every limb.

"You shall go to the man-eater yourself if the tiger won't attack him," cried the King, furiously.

The court was oppressively hot; the King sat, fanned by the great peacocks' tails, and surrounded by his female slaves watching. The second tiger's cage was brought up: he came leisurely out, and only when poked by spears, and then quietly surveyed his antagonist. He was larger than Burrhea, but not so high bred or so beautifully streaked, neither was he so light and graceful in his motions. He squatted himself down on the dead mare, and tore it leisurely in pieces, with a strength of claw and limb and jaw, very unpleasant, one would think, to watch, for the man-eater, who remained on the defensive on the other side of the court.

"Remove the carcass, you fools!" shouted the King, angry at the delay.

This could only be done by driving away the tiger with red-hot bars. A noose was then flung over the dead mare, which was at length drawn out. The tiger, much annoyed, stretched himself at full length, and lay growling in the middle of the court, where he could not be reached; At last they contrived to strike him with a spear of immense length: he seized it in his mouth, ran along its length, and began to shake the bamboo rails, but nothing would induce him to assail the horse, who went on as before facing the tiger as he turned. He showed his glittering teeth at the men, but refused to move in the direction of Kunewallah.

We began to fear for the poor keeper of the wild beasts, but the King had now forgotten his threat, and shouted that the man-eater was a brave fellow, and he would see what he could do with three buffaloes. There is no animal so fierce when thoroughly roused; he will put a good-sized elephant to flight, goring him terribly with those tremendous weapons, his horns.

When the beasts came in, the man-eater seemed much disconcerted at the sight of the uncouth monsters, and he retreated snorting, almost with fear; but as they remained in the corner where they came in, huddled together, and never dreaming of an attack, he took courage, pawed the ground, snuffed at them with distended nostrils, and came slowly nearer

and nearer, step by step. Still they paid no heed to him, but crowded stupidly on each other. At last the horse's head almost touched the side of one of the buffaloes, he sniffed and smelled at the hide, and, at last, seeing that the unwieldy brute took no notice whatever of him, he wheeled round, and lashed up furiously against the ribs of the meditating buffalo, who seemed stunned by so sudden and unlooked-for an attack, and then they all three shook their heads, but prudently abstained from any reply.

The King laughed outrageously. "The man-eater deserves his life," said he; "let him escape."

The beast was then adroitly muzzled, and led forth to his stables, a victor.

"By my father's head, he is a brave fellow; he shall have a cage to live in, and be taken care of for his life."

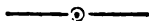
He had an iron cage made for him, twice as big as many London drawing-rooms, where he snapped his teeth, and lashed out with his legs, at admiring visitors; "and when I left Lucknow," says Mr. Knighton, "the man-eater was still one of its sights."

Respect for the power of those with whom we have to deal is one mode of their ensuring good treatment. Kunewallah may, therefore, perhaps assist in winning this tribute for his race.

The enormous strength in the muscles of a horse's head and neck, shown by the manner in which the man-eater was able to lift a human being from the ground with his mouth, and shake him, might show us that this power ought to be used in our service, not wasted, and thus help in emancipating the horse from a grievance very commonly inflicted even by those who should know better. The bearing-rein utterly deprives him (and us) of this advantage in the draught of a carriage or cart. It puts the beast to great suffering, as may be seen by the impatient, weary tossing of the head of a horse so braced up, and it takes away from the means which Nature has given him of moving a heavy weight, by throwing the centre of gravity farther forwards, as well as of the free use of his muscles. There is no single advantage connected with its use but a fancy that it makes the horse look better, which no one who knows anything of the real action of the animal would agree to for a moment; and nothing but a barbarous disregard of his comfort and feelings, and ignorance of our own advantage, could have preserved the use of such an engine for so long.

One cannot go quite so far as to desire the presence of a few Kune-

wallahs in England, in order to insure by a smart practice of their heels that liberty of their heads which is so desirable, but if the account of his prowess induces any one to consider this and other questions connected with the use of horses, his wickedness and his courage will not have been in vain.



FIRE IN THE WOODS.

I CAN conceive of nothing in this world more awful than one of those fires which sometimes rush through the forests and across the prairies of North America, with more fearful rapidity and destructive fury than any lava-stream that ever poured from the fiercest volcano. The first time I ever saw the traces of such a conflagration was in Nova Scotia, between Halifax and Truro, on the road to Pictou. The driver of the stage—and a better or merrier never mounted a box, or guided a team through mud and over corduroy—pointed out to me the spot in which he and his charge had a most narrow escape. While pursuing his journey along one of those forest roads, ramparted on each side by tall trees that show but a narrow strip of blue sky overhead, he found himself involved in volumes of smoke bursting from the woods. It did not require the experience of an inhabitant of the great Western Continent to reveal to him instantly his terrible position. The woods were on fire! But whether the fire was far off or near, he could not tell. If far off, he knew it was making towards him with the speed of a race-horse; if near, a few minutes must involve him in the conflagration. Suddenly the fire burst before him! It was crossing the road and forming a canopy overhead; sending along tongues of flame, with wreaths of smoke, from one tree-top to another; crackling and roaring as it sped upon its devouring path; licking up the tufted heads of the pines, while the wind whirled them onwards to extend the conflagration. What was to be done? To retreat was useless. Miles of forest were behind ready to be consumed. There was only one chance of escape. Nathan had heard in the morning a report that a mill had been burnt. The spot where it had stood was about six hundred yards ahead. He argued, that the fire, having been there and consumed everything, could not again visit the same place. He determined to make a desperate rush through fire and smoke to reach

the clearing. The conflagration was as yet above him like a glowing arch, though it had partially extended to the ground on either side. He had six horses, to be sure, tried animals, who knew his voice, and whom he seemed to love as friends ; but such a coach !—lumbering and springless, and full of passengers too, chiefly ladies ; and such roads !—a combination of trunks of trees buried in thick mud. But on he must go, or perish. Bending his head down, blind, hardly able to breathe, lashing his horses, and shouting to the trembling, terrified creatures, while the ladies screamed in the agony of fear, Nathan went plunging and tossing through the terrific scene ! A few minutes more, and all would be over ; for the coach is scorched, and about to take fire, and the horses are getting unmanageable ! Another desperate rush—he has reached the clearing, and there is the mill, a mass of charred wood, surrounded by a forest of ebony trunks growing out of charred earth. The fire has passed, and Nathan is safe !

“Oh ! sir,” he said, “it *was* frightful ! Think only if a horse had stumbled or fallen ! or had the fire caught us farther back !—five minutes more would have done it, sir !”

That same fire consumed a space of forest ten miles long, and three broad !

But what was such a fire even, to the memorable one which devastated Miramichi, in New Brunswick, more than fifty years ago ? That terrific conflagration is unparalleled in the history of consumed forests. It broke out on the 7th October, 1825, about sixty miles above the town of Newcastle, at one in the afternoon, and before ten the same night it had extended twenty miles beyond it ; thus traversing, in nine hours, a distance of eighty miles of forest, with a breadth of about twenty-five ! Over this great tract of country everything was destroyed ; a large number of persons perished ; not a tree was left ; the very fish in the streams were scorched, and found lying afterwards dead in heaps.

The morning of that dreadful day was calm and sultry ; but, in an instant, smoke swept over the town of Newcastle (situated on the river Miramichi), which turned day into night. The darkness was so unexpected—so sudden—so profound—that many cried that the Judgment had come. But soon the true cause was suspected. Fear was speedily followed by certainty, as the flames were seen bursting through the gloom. Every one made for the river ; some got into boats moored near the beach, some on rafts of timber, while others stood in the water. Terrified mothers with their families, decrepit old men and women, and, worse



than all, the sick and dying, were hurried, in despairing crowds, to the stream, to escape the flames which were already devouring their houses and making a bonfire of the thriving town.

Each succeeding hour added some new horror to the scene. The rarefaction and exhaustion of the air by the intense heat over so great a space, caused such a rush of cold air from the ocean, that a hurricane rushed in fury along the river, tearing burning trees up by the roots, hurling flaming branches through the air for five or six miles (which set fire to the shipping and to the woods on the other side of the broad stream), causing, at the same time, such rolling waves as threatened to swamp the boats, and sweep the miserable refugees from the rafts! It seems incredible, but we believe there is no doubt as to the fact, that the ashes of the fire fell thick on the streets of Halifax, St. John's (Newfoundland), and Quebec; and that some were carried as far as the Bermudas, while the smoke darkened the air hundreds of miles off! That terrible night is fresh in the memory of all who endured its horrors. One of my informants, speaking of it, said, "No language can describe it! I do not think I shall see anything like it again in this world or until the last day. I was in a druggist's shop getting medicine for my wife, who was confined to bed with fever. The druggist was pouring a few drops into a phial, when literally in a twinkling of an eye it became so dark that he could not see to drop the medicine, and I could not see his face! 'The last day has come!' we both exclaimed. I left the shop to go home; but it was so pitch dark that I could not see the road, and had to walk in the ditch which bordered it. Guided by the paling, and assisted by a friend, I got my wife and children to the river, and placed them on a raft; and what a scene!—what weeping and crying of those whose relations lived in the settlements farther back, and for whom they knew there was now no escape! But there is no use talking about it. No tongue can find words to picture that night! Fire and smoke, wind and water, all spending their utmost fury; the children crying—the timid screaming—the sick in misery—the brave at their wits' end—and all knowing, too, that we had lost many friends, and all our property. I shudder to think of it!"

That fire left singular traces of its journey. The road from Newcastle to Bathurst, near the Bay of Chaleur, passes for five or six miles through a district called The Barrens. The scene which meets the eye of the traveller is perhaps unequalled. Far as he can look upon every side, there is nothing but desolation. The forest extends, as it has done for

ages, across plains, and vanishes over the undulating hills which bound the distant horizon. But while all the trees, with most of their branches, remain, spring extracts no bud from them, nor does summer clothe even a twig with foliage. All is a barren waste! The trees are not black now, but white, and bleached by sun and rain; and far to the horizon, round and round, nothing is discerned but one vast and apparently boundless forest of white skeleton trunks of dead leafless trees! That immense tract is doomed to remain barren, perhaps, for ever,—at least for many long years to come. It is avoided by the emigrant,—nay, the very birds and wild beasts seem to have for ever deserted it. The trees would not, in a country of forest, pay the expense of cutting them down for firewood, even were the chopping process of half-burnt trunks less difficult and disagreeable than it is; while the land has become so scourged by the exuberant crop of various plants which grow up in such a soil, when cleared by a fire, as to be comparatively useless in a colony of countless acres yet untouched by the plough of the settler.

Though no such fire as that which devastated Miramichi ever visited any of our colonies before or since, yet partial fires are very common. I saw a very respectable Scotch emigrant in Prince Edward's Island, whose house was suddenly caught by one of those dreadful visitations, and whose two daughters were burnt alive, before their father, who escaped, could warn them of their danger.



AN ADVENTURE WITH A WOLF.

"NAY, thou art but a coward, Pierre," said Susette to her brother. "Thou talkest of the good mother, and wouldst let her die, because thou art afraid to go fetch the doctor's stuff."

"Our mother is better," answered Pierre. "She bids thee not to go."

"Rest tranquil, my child," feebly gasped the old woman, "and blame not the good Pierre. My son is no coward. He is brave. Art not *thou* brave? And he is thy brother, and a man. He loves the old mother, and would not let her die. He has reason. I need no doctor's stuff. Pray for me to the Blessed Virgin and St. Genevieve; 't will do me far more good."

Pierre had finished his frost-shortened winter day's work on the little farm which he and Susette—for the old widow was past work—tilled between them. Susette was the harder worker of the two, but was not nearly so ready as her brother to cry out for rest. Having, with her help, made all snug about the little homestead and eaten the lion's share of the evening meal which she had cooked, Pierre had seated himself, with his pipe in his mouth and his sabots off, before the fire which she had piled. His work for the day was done. His sister would get his mother to bed. All that he had to do was to get comfortably warm and then to turn into his own, not to turn out of it until Susette had lighted the fire and prepared the morning meal. He was enjoying himself as a bullock enjoys itself when it chews the cud recumbent in the sunshine. He did not at all relish the idea of putting on his stiff sabots again, muffling up, and turning out for a five miles walk in the cold, the first part of it in the dark, just because his fanciful sister chose to believe that his mother was worse than usual.

He not care for his mother, indeed! The idea was preposterous. Whom did the good old mother love the better of the two, himself or Susette? Would she have made him her favourite if he had been the coward his sneering sister insinuated he was? And had not the good mother forbidden either of them to go? Accordingly Pierre settled himself in his seat, and tried to toast his toes with a good conscience.

Not long before the little farmstead had been snowed up. The few beasts moped in their dark confinement, now and then giving a dreary low or cough. The poultry sat silent on their perches all day long, some of them with their heads beneath their wings. Game came in from the forest close up to the farmhouse doors, and the scanty small birds of the district became scantier—dropped dead, starved with cold and hunger. Since then the snow had melted enough to open the roads, but after the thaw there had come a frost, which made the cold worse than ever. It burnt up laurel and holly-leaves like fire, and turned the ground into iron.

It was not only the cold that Pierre was afraid of. At night wolves prowled and howled about the house, and even by day came out of the forest into the fields. Part of the road to the doctor's lay through the forest. Cold, darkness, wolves,—Pierre did not relish the thought of such a walk at all. He preferred to toast his toes and puff away at his pipe.

Presently his mother began to cough.

"I will cease to fume," said Pierre.



And he laid down his pipe, trying to think that in making that sublime sacrifice he was discharging his filial duty in full.

"Chut!" cried his sister, in angry scorn. "'T was not thy tobacco made our mother cough. Canst thou not see that without her doctor's stuff she will have no rest all night?"

Susette got her mother to bed, made her as comfortable as she could, and slipped out.

"Where is thy sister, Pierre?" the old lady presently asked.

"Doubtless at our neighbour Tissot's," answered Pierre. "She goes there far too often. 'T is to see young Jean. Susette has neither shame nor sense. The Tissots are as poor as church mice."

"I will speak to her," replied the old woman. "Thou art my own good Pierre to stay with thine old mother."

Susette, I scarce need say, had really started to get her mother's medicine. After a time the old woman said, "Go fetch thy sister, Pierre. Tell her I bid her come home at once. 'T is time we were all abed."

But affectionate Pierre answered nay—he could not leave his mother.

Susette by that time was nearing home with the draught that was to give her mother repose. Although she was brave, she could not help shuddering as she hurried through the dark wood, and when the moon rose the shadows that it cast upon the hard white ground did not compose her spirits.

She heard wolves howling in the distance, and ere long she heard one galloping behind her. Clutching her bottle, she sped wildly onwards, but soon she heard the long stride of the panting wolf close behind.

A scream roused Pierre from his nap before the fire. He went to the door, but although he had recognized his sister's voice, he did not venture out until he heard a man's voice.

Then he ventured, and found that young Jean Tissot had rushed from his cottage, and saved Susette from a wolf by dashing his bare fist into its muzzle.

The two young men raised her from the ground, and carried her to her home.

"My good infant! to go so far for thy old mother! but my brave Pierre saved thee," said the old woman, when Susette had been restored to consciousness.

"Bah!" answered Susette, giving her real rescuer a look of love, which made him ready to dance upon his head; "drink thy draught in peace, my mother!"

A NIGHT IN THE SNOW.

"IT'S a good many years now," said Major F——, "since I started, one winter morning, to go across part of the Lower Pyrenees by diligence. There was a good deal of snow about, and I had heard plenty of stories of accidents and upsets as I came along; but there were plenty of other passengers going, and I thought that, with so many hands, we ought to be able to take care of ourselves, even if anything *did* go wrong. So I took my place along with the rest, and away we went.

"Just at first starting we got along well enough. It was a clear bright morning, and the road was pretty hard, and the distant view of the snowy mountains glittering in the rising sun, with great patches of dark green pine forest flecking them every here and there, made a fine picture. But when we began to get fairly in among the hills, and I saw how deep the snow was getting, and how the great leaden clouds were banking up over the distant peaks, threatening a heavier fall than ever, I must confess that I caught myself, once or twice, wishing that I hadn't been in quite such a hurry to start.

"However, it was too late now, so I turned to my next neighbour (a grand old officer with a long white moustache) and said,—

"'Well, monsieur, what kind of journey do you think we shall have?'

"'Peut-être nous y échapperons—faut-espérer.' (*Perhaps* we shall escape—must hope so!)

"This shut my mouth, as you may think; but my offer, some time later, of a cigar, opened the old man's heart, and he was soon chatting away pleasantly enough. He told me a good many rather interesting things about that part of the country (of which he was a native), and wound up with a long and very gruesome legend about a huge tree far up among the mountains, popularly called 'The Wizard's Tree,' in honour of a nice old gentleman of the sorcerer persuasion, who had lived near it about a thousand years ago.

"'And when he died,' concluded my companion, in a voice which sounded as if it came from the bottom of a coal-shaft, 'he bade his followers bury him under the great stone which lies beside the tree, and laid a curse upon the spot, that whosoever might be lost anywhere near it should wander till he came to the tree; and, go in which direction he

might, he must always come back to it again, till he died at last of exhaustion and despair !'

" 'And whereabouts *is* this delightful place?' asked I, in some trepidation.

" 'We shall pass it *to-night* !'

" And, with this piece of Job's comfort, the oracle relapsed into silence.

" Night came at last—such a night as I need hardly describe to *you* who have had a taste of diligence-travelling for yourself, and know all its miseries—the rank, mouldy atmosphere getting more and more unbearable every hour—the intolerable cramping making you feel at last as if the mere possession of a human body at all were a separate evil of itself—the apparently wanton stoppage of the coach (just as every one has fallen asleep) to change horses, with that boundless expenditure of shrieking and gesticulation without which no duty can ever be performed by Frenchmen—the frantic, hopeless longing to stretch your legs, only once, to their fullest length—the deep, rhythmical, unbroken snoring of every one except yourself, and their unanimous declaration, next morning, that 'they never closed an eye,' and that 'it was too bad of you to make such a noise.'

" However, *we* had variety in our miseries, and plenty of it. More than once, as we were dropping off to sleep from sheer weariness, there came a jolt that seemed to dislocate every bone in our bodies, showing that the wheels had come upon a big stone under the snow ; and a little before midnight, going up a slippery incline, the driver opened the door, and coolly told us that the diligence couldn't get up with its full weight on board, and that we must all turn out and walk to the top. So out we scrambled, and trudged, or rather floundered, through the snow for several hundred yards ; and as it was knee-deep and soft as sugar, you may think how nice and wet we all got. When we stepped in again I heard my poor old officer's teeth clattering like castanets ; so I took pity on him, and gave him a nip of brandy from my flask, and wasn't the poor old boy grateful for it !

" It was about one o'clock in the morning, as near as I can guess, when I was aroused from a half-stupid kind of doze by a jolt like the shock of an earthquake, and found myself executing a kind of complicated wrestling-match with my venerable friend on the right—his head being jammed into my stomach, and my elbows digging a hole in the small of his back ; while all around us was a hurly-burly of screaming, snorting, kicking, crashing of wood, and jingling of glass, worthy of an Irish election.



"I guessed at once what had happened, and attempted to get out; but this was no easy matter. With my usual luck, I happened to be on the *under-side*, and the only available exit was blocked by a writhing mass of passengers. At length the topmost item of the heap managed to open the door and scramble out, and the rest of us followed one by one.

"I at once proceeded to look for possible breakages, and was rather glad to find that my bones were all sound, and that, barring a pretty free flow of blood from my nose, I was none the worse. My companions, however, had not been so fortunate. The driver had broken his head, the off-wheeler its hind leg; two of the passengers in the *interieur* were badly bruised, and one of our wheels was smashed to atoms. Add to this that it was freezing hard, and a wind blowing keen enough to cut you in two—and you may fancy what a jovial outlook it was for us all!

"The first thing I did was to seize one of the coach-lanterns (which had escaped by some miracle), and, calling out to the rest that I was going forward in search of help, away I plunged through the snow. As I went I heard the old officer shouting something after me, but I couldn't make out what he said—though, as it afterwards turned out, it would have been better for me if I had.

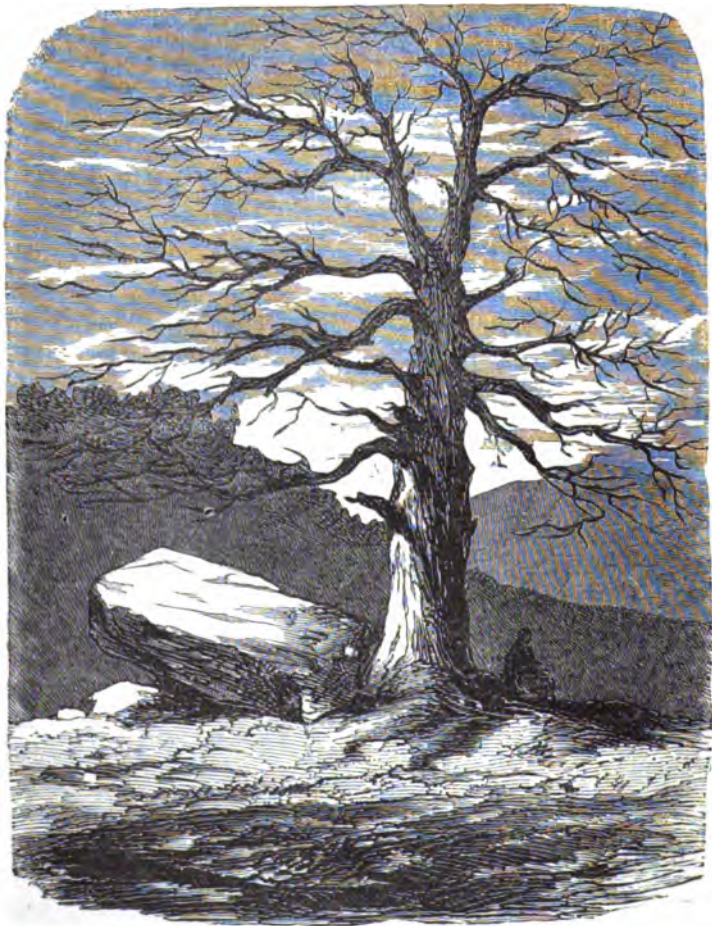
"Away I went, through drift after drift—now up to the knee, now up to the waist, now over head altogether—till at last I really hardly knew whether I was on the road or off it. But I was destined to be very speedily enlightened on *that* point.

"I had just caught sight (or thought I had) of a light a little way ahead, and was stepping to one side to get a better view of it, when, all in a moment—before I could even cry out—the ground seemed to slip away from under my feet, a great splash of snow came right up in my face; and down I went, at first feet foremost, and then rolling over and over, till I got so dazed and dizzy that I couldn't have told the Thames Embankment from a plate of water-cresses. When I *did* come right side up again, and could look about me a little, I found myself in a deep gully, or rather pit, ever so many feet deep, and half filled with soft snow. As for the lantern, it had gone goodness knows where.

"Well, of course I wasn't going to stick there and get frozen, so, as soon as the stun of my fall had gone off a bit, I set to to climb up the side. A horrid job that was, to be sure! My hands were so numbed that I could hardly move them, and great masses of snow kept rolling down upon me from above, and I slipped back two feet for every one I got up; and really I hardly know *how* I managed it at last. However, up I got,

somehow or other ; and just as I reached the top, the first glimmer of the rising moon gave me light enough to look about me.

"Then I *did* give a jump, if you like ! Right in front of me, standing gauntly up against the dim sky, rose a blasted tree, its huge trunk gaping



with a hideous rift, and all its mighty limbs white and sapless as the bones of a skeleton. There was no other tree or bush anywhere near it—it seemed as if the very ground on which it stood were accursed ; and by

that, as well as by the great mass of rock that lay beside it, I recognized it in a moment.

"It was the Wizard's Tree!

"Then I knew that I must have lost my way completely; and it came upon me like a sudden panic. Away I rushed, not knowing whither I went—for the moon had just clouded over again, and I was in utter darkness—my only thought, for the moment, being to escape from that hateful place. But I soon got so buried in the snow that I could hardly make way at all; and by this time I was getting so tired and heavy, that, more than once (although I knew it would be certain death), I could hardly keep myself from lying down in the snow and going to sleep on the spot. My feet seemed to be made of lead; and my hands were all blue and swollen, and had no more feeling in them than a log of wood.

"I don't know how long I struggled on in this fashion; but all at once, just as I was getting fairly beat out, the moon suddenly broke out again, this time almost as bright as day; and I stopped short as if I had been shot.

"There was the tree again!

"Then I fairly gave myself up for lost. Weak and dazed as I was, I really half believed the old story for a moment, and looked upon myself as a doomed man. You should just have heard the howl I gave! it was enough to wake up the entire country!

"All at once I thought I heard an answering halloo. I shouted again, and this time there *was* an answer—no mistake about it. Presently there came a sound of steps ploughing through the snow, and up came a tall man in a rough frieze jacket and leather leggings, with a long gun slung across his shoulders.

"'Ah! here you are, then, monsieur!' said he, as coolly as if we had met by special appointment. 'The diligence people told me that there was one gentleman still missing, and I thought *this* would be the likeliest place to look for you. Come along with me; it's not far to my hut, and you'll find 'em all there.'

"It was just as well for me that it *wasn't* far to the good fellow's hut, or I should never have got there; as it was, even with him to help me, I could scarcely drag myself along. However, I got there at last, and found a good fire and a pretty substantial supper, which soon set me on my feet again. But I've never forgotten that night's work; and, indeed, I think that the rheumatism I caught then has stuck by me, off and on, ever since. So now, there's the whole story for you."

UNUSUAL FISHING.

FISHING is usually considered a more gentle craft than either hunting or shooting, and thus not to afford such excitement, or to call forth one's manly qualities so much as the more warlike sports. It may be true that to cast a fly over some quiet English stream is not a very exciting or dangerous proceeding, any more than is standing at a cover-side, slaughtering driven, half-tame pheasants ; but there is excitement to be found in fishing, and some novelties to be experienced, as we trust will be satisfactorily proved by the following anecdotes.

We had, very early in our fishing career, enjoyed what may be considered fair sport. At eight years of age we had succeeded in hooking a twelve-pounds pike—having abstracted without leave an elder brother's rod, impaled a minnow on the hook, and dropped the bait into the river Lea. Alarmed at the strength of the fish we had caught, our shouts, or rather screams, brought the gardener to our aid, and *we* together landed the fish. At twelve years of age we were deadly at perch and gudgeon, had hooked perch in the Lea, in the Thames, and Medway, for we were the constant attendant of a fishing friend. At sixteen we had aided in a great mackerel catch at the back of the Isle of Wight ; had caught our six dozen whiting pout in two hours' fishing at Spithead ; had landed our basketful of dace and trout in the Hampshire rivers, walking along the banks of the Avon and Trent ; had a few years later hooked scores of "chad" in Plymouth Sound, and were thus early initiated in the art of fishing.

All these events, however, were the usual, and it is our purpose now to deal with the unusual, which we will commence with on our own shores.

"I am going out fishing to-night near the Plymouth Breakwater," said my friend ; "we shall probably catch conger : will you come?"

"By all means," was our reply ; and as soon as it was thoroughly dark we entered the large, well-provided boat, whose contents were distinguished by the aid of a couple of lanterns with which the boat was furnished.

A light breeze wafted us from Stadden Point to the breakwater, when, having selected a likely position, a large stone was cast overboard to serve as anchor, rope was paid out, and we commenced our preparations.

A large and strong hook was used, which was attached to the solid

line, either by pieces of wire, or by frayed hempen sort of rope—for the conger, like a pike, will bite in twain an average line—and thus the effect of his teeth is destroyed. (According to the fancy or experience of the individual, so was the hook baited, either with a piece of raw meat, a slice of chad, a piece of red rag, or a lug-worm, we preferring a few “lug” tied on to the hook.)

A heavy lead carried our line down, when, having touched the bottom, we raised it a few inches and waited the result. In sea-fishing of this description, it is rarely of any use to try one's patience too much: should a “bite” not be given, it is the better plan to up anchor and try another fishing-ground if a quarter of an hour has produced no results. Such was our proceeding on the present occasion, for at first no results were obtained. Shortly after our lines had been lowered over fresh ground, we felt an unmistakable tug at the line which we held over the boat's side—a smart jerk was responded to by a steady strain on our line, and we knew we had hooked something whose strength was great.

It required two hands and all our power to haul in the heavy line with its captive, but not until the hook was within a few feet of the water did the real battle commence. Then the conger, for such it proved to be, put out all its resisting powers, and tried hard to break away; but the line was good, and the hook held firmly, and with the aid of one of the boatmen, a young boa-constrictor-looking creature was dragged into the boat and speedily dispatched, to the evident satisfaction of the knowing hands, who seemed to have a very wholesome dread of the teeth of this sea-monster. This, our first conger, was a fine specimen, and weighed about twenty pounds, a size that is often exceeded, some having, we were assured, been caught on the same fishing-ground weighing sixty and seventy pounds.

A conger is not to be handled with impunity until life is extinct: its teeth are very formidable, and it is capable of giving a severe bite. When caught and placed in a boat, it is inclined to seize everything within reach, and to find one's great toe between a conger's teeth is by no means a pleasant experience.

During the night two other congers were caught, both, however, of a smaller size, whilst a fine bass was added to the draught. The fineness of the evening, the quietness of the locality, interrupted only by the passing of some vessel, as she threaded her way up the channels on either side, and the yarns of the boatmen as they detailed their former adventures, and related, with an evidently strange mixture of superstition and experi-

ence, their opinions connected with the fish they had caught and the best means to be adopted to secure success, tended to pass the time. At length we began to consider it unlikely another fish would be hooked, and therefore we might as well return on shore, have a parting glass, and retire between the sheets.

There are few things more surprising and disappointing to the landsman than to discover when he goes to sea that he obtains no fish fresh for breakfast or dinner, and in a multitude of cases rarely ever sees a fish. It is true that the monsters of the deep may be seen at times, and shoals of porpoises, schools of whales, a grampus, and a few dolphins be by no means uncommon sights; but it is only near the shore, on sand-banks or coral reefs, that fish abound, whilst the ocean itself is but thinly tenanted.

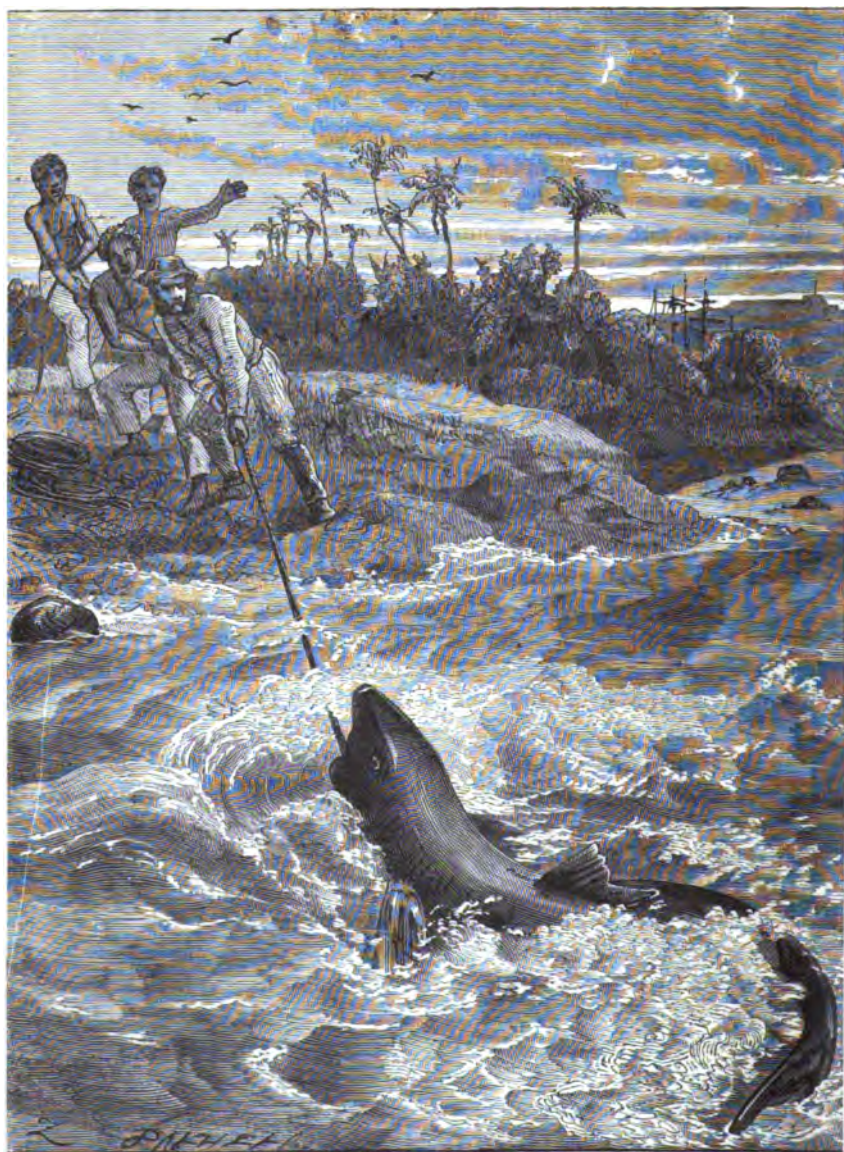
Of the monsters of the deep the grampus was the first creature of which we had a close view. This happened when our vessel was near the Canary Islands. The day was clear and sunny, as it usually is in those latitudes, and little more than a ripple was on the sea. The vessel, running about eight knots per hour, glided smoothly through the waters, her lower studding-sail-booms gracefully dipping now and again, and just lifting the spray from the pigmy waves. "Look! look!" was the exclamation of the mate, as he pointed to the sea a few yards astern; and on looking we there beheld a monster, about twenty feet in length, of a brown colour, with a snub nose and broad back. It came on with speed, though there was no sign of the means by which it propelled itself; in an instant it was alongside, and we looked directly down on the creature, which rose and fell in the waters as does a boat over the waves, or a finch in its aerial flight. On the head was a large hole, through which the creature puffed and blew, so that we have ever since appreciated the trite expression of "blowing like a grampus."

The first idea of those who possessed a spotting tendency on board was to seize a harpoon and bury it in the body of the grampus. The captain, however, was more cautious, and anticipated dangerous consequences; for he believed that, as the monster fish was at the time rubbing itself against the vessel's sides, it would, when wounded, damage the ship by the slashing of its powerful tail. Thus he stayed the uplifted hand of the harpooner, and we contemplated the strange creature that had thus fraternized with the ship, and was within arms' reach of us, until, getting tired of our society, it turned off and disappeared from view.

Everybody connected in any way with the sea is always delighted when a shark is killed. A shark is the great water enemy of mankind; the delightful bath is either impossible or bereft of half its pleasures when sharks are known to be near. A boat that is upset causes a fatal accident in shark-frequented waters, whereas it might produce only a ducking under other circumstances. Thus a sailor believes that he who kills a shark deserves well of his country and companions. The shark dies a craven; he affords very little of that sport which renders trout and salmon-fishing so attractive; his first rush as he feels himself hooked is usually powerful enough, but after that he exhibits little but sullenness. A young shark is usually more vigorous and determined in his resistance than is one of larger growth, and with these we have had good sport. In most rivers of tropical countries sharks will be found near the mouths, especially at high tide, and those who are disposed for sport only, will find ample in such localities. The plan we adopted was to procure two pieces of copper wire, twist these firmly together, and lash a hook on to the end. A stout piece of cord was then made fast to the wire, and a bladder attached to the cord. About a hundred and fifty yards of cord were coiled up on the bank in order to play the hooked fish, a piece of meat was then fastened on the hook, and the bait flung out seaward. The hands for this work ought to be protected by a stout pair of leather or india-rubber gloves, so that a check may be given to the cord as the fish runs out with it.

Having made our preparations in this way, we cast our line, and had scarcely secured the end than we saw the bladder that indicated the position of our hook and bait travel rapidly up stream, bob under water, and again appear. A rapid tug at the cord was resisted, and immediately afterwards the line flew through our hands, nearly a hundred yards being paid out without a check. Then we, however, obtained a pull at our captive, and brought him near the shore, sighted him, and saw he was a shark about four feet long. When the young cannibal saw us he struggled hard to escape, but his ravenous appetite had been his ruin, as the hook was deeply buried in his throat, and in ten minutes from the time of his being hooked, he was dragged snapping and wriggling on to dry land.

On more than one occasion, however, the fish we thus hooked was too much for us, and carried out and off the whole of our line; and had we not resigned the end, we ourselves would have been dragged into the sea, our efforts been feeble in comparison to the power of the monster who



had swallowed our bait, and was equally capable apparently of swallowing us.

Numerous are the tragedies that have taken place with the shark. One or two we will refer to.

A party of soldiers were bathing near the shore on one of our Mediterranean stations, where sharks are usually considered harmless. Above a hundred men were in the water together, some far out, others close in shore, when the alarm was given that a shark was approaching. Scarcely had the note of warning been given than the shark, passing by a score or more of men, seized one who was quite near the shore, dragged him under water, and disappeared with him ; the shouts, frantic beatings of the water, &c., of the men, being of no avail to make the monster give up his prey.

A shark had for several days been seen following a ship, but no attempts had been made to capture it. A ship's boy, however, determined to have a trial, and having prepared his hook and line, clambered into the ship's chains in order to throw out his bait. Unfortunately the jerk caused by throwing overbalanced the boy, who fell into the sea. A rush was made aft and a rope cast towards the lad, who was, as is usual with sailors, unable to swim. The effort failed to save him, and in another second he was approached by the sea-monster, which, slightly turning its head, seized the boy and dragged him under water, disappearing from the sight of those on deck and of those who entered the boat in order to revenge his death.

We ourselves were once in very unpleasant proximity to a shark. We were in the habit of bathing every morning soon after sunrise, and had arranged a long plank on piles as a sort of spring-board. Having started along this plank as usual and reached nearly the end, our balance having been lost, we cast our eyes down, and there beneath us, not five feet under water, was a shark double our own length. With that instinct which comes to all of us in times of danger, we at once felt that the safest plan was to jump at the shark rather than try to avoid him, and thus we directed our plunge at him. We had to swim some forty yards to regain the shore, and this was indeed trying work ; but the shark had made off, and we lived to tell the tale, he probably being alarmed at the attack threatened by our plunge at him.

In the bays and along the coast of South Africa fish are found in abundance. Among these the Cape-snook, the keel-back, rock-cod, and parrot-fish are the most edible. The snook is caught when a vessel or

boat is moving about three or four knots an hour, the bait consisting of a red rag dragging astern. This fish weighs from six to twelve pounds, and is killed instantly it is dragged on board, as it has a great inclination to seize the feet, ankles, or legs of those who come too close to it.

The keel-back frequents the bays, and is caught much in the same manner as is the dog-fish or young shark. The bait is thrown out into the deep water and then allowed to sink, all fishing-rods being dispensed with.

Rock-cod and parrot-fish frequent the rocky coast, and are caught by baiting with zoophytes, oysters, mussels, &c., or with a piece of freshly-caught fish. The parrot-fish, so called from its brilliant colours of red, blue, and green, grows to the size of about ten pounds, and is tolerably well flavoured. It gives plenty of sport, and the fisherman has to hold his prey so firmly, yet delicately, as to prevent it from diving amidst rocky crevices, but not to cause the hook to break away; often too the long roll of the sea dashes the waves against and over the rock on which he is standing, drenching him from head to foot, and almost washing him away. This coast fishing is not such tame work as some may suppose, but possesses a considerable amount of excitement and calls forth much skill, though of a type different from that which the salmon or trout fishermen might consider worth studying.

The use of a small spear with a barbed end is a means of obtaining sport in some waters; with such a weapon we have succeeded in killing fish as large as a salmon. To the spear we attached a stout line, and having attracted the fish to the boat by means of a quantity of bait broadcast on the waters, we selected our victim and cast our spear at him. The ease with which the iron blade passes through a fish is marvellous, and when once struck, escape is impossible, for the barbed end holds more firmly than any hook.

From shark and conger to parrot-fish and rock-cod there is but a step: all afford sport, and when our destiny carries us inland in tropical climates, the rivers, lakes, and pools will surely yield us game of some kind. We may not unusually find the alligator or crocodile a worthy antagonist, and we may vary the sport by catching the smallest fry with a tiny hook and a single line. To the true sportsman it is not the size or quantity of the game only which ensures sport, but it is the skill required to gain a victory with such weapons as give the creature pursued a chance for its life. When, however, there is any uncertainty as regards the size and nature of the fish to be captured, our interest is greater than when we can predict

what we can capture. Thus the uncertainty of sea-fishing, the probability of a shark or a shrimp playing with our bait, the knowledge that a small cod-fish or a monster keel-back may be hooked, gives a variety to this sport which to our mind amply compensates for the loss of much of that delicate art which has brought fly-fishing deservedly into popularity and prominence.



A MIDSHIPMAN'S FIRST COMMAND.

I.

IT was the second morning after our successful night attack in Pirate's Creek, and the slave schooner, our beautiful prize, was still lying at anchor within a biscuit-throw of the *Planet*. The day was intensely hot, and the small party of five who were sitting at breakfast in the midshipmen's berth, finding the weight even of white jackets too oppressive, had thrown them off in the vain hope of coolness, and now presented a light and airy appearance in white duck trousers and shirt-sleeves—a most delusive appearance! for while drinking our milkless tea, the beads of moisture coursed down our cheeks, *drip, drip*, like a shower of small shot. I could stand it no longer, and called out to the black steward,—

“Give me my jacket, Tom, I'm going on deck.”

“Yes, Massa Murray.”

But as the steward lifted the jacket from the peg where it hung, he gave a yell and dropped it. His fingers had touched a large centipede hidden behind the folds.

“Don't kill it,” cried the assistant-surgeon. “It's a lovely specimen. I must preserve it in spirits.” And he ran out of the berth for a pair of forceps.

“Yes, very lovely,” I said, as, on looking up, I saw the horrible reddish-brown creature, about seven inches long, curled like the letter S; all its countless legs in motion, with the fore part of its body raised and twisting about, apparently in the act of dropping on my head. “But how am I to preserve *my* spirits when he bites me?”

The doctor came back as I jumped out of the way, and, with his forceps, caught the centipede cleverly in the middle. The thing tried hard to get at its enemy, twisting and twining like an eel. We began to have

doubts whether the instrument was quite long enough to save the doctor's fingers. In another moment there was no doubt at all in the matter: he dashed the venomous creature, forceps and all, to the deck, only just in time to escape its dangerous bite, and uttered no word of reproach as he witnessed his "specimen" trodden to death.

Centipedes were becoming rather too numerous on board. Only a few days previously, Captain Dentloup, when pulling on a long Wellington boot, felt something moving about inside. Feeling that if he attempted to withdraw his foot he must be bitten, he stamped it bravely down, and succeeded in crushing the intruder, which proved to be a centipede rather smaller than our visitor in the berth. The captain called this a good illustration of the proverb, "Grasp your nettle," and he was right.

When I got on deck, it seemed hotter even than below. Awnings were spread, but the pitch was melting out of the seams in any part not fully sheltered. It was the hour, on the West Coast of Africa—and indeed on all tropical shores—ever the most oppressive, when the cool land-wind, which blows at night, has died away, and the sea-breeze has not yet set in. Turning landward, the trees and mangrove-bushes on the north banks of the Congo, where we had lurked two nights waiting for the slaver, quivered in the heated air, and the reflection of the sun in the still water, between us and the shore, seemed to burn the eyeballs. I looked to seaward, and at length, far away towards the horizon, saw the glassy smoothness of the water flecked here and there by gentle ripples, the first faint breathings of the wind—"cats'-paws," sailors call them. Touches of an angel's wing, I would rather say—the fair angel of health bringing the blessed sea-breeze on her wings.

Although the surface was perfectly smooth, yet there was a long unbroken swell, under the influence of which the schooner close by was rolling and curtsying gracefully, showing, as she rose from the water, her copper covered with weeds, the results of her long stay up the Congo. Her deck was crowded with the woolly heads and black skins of the negroes, who were revelling in the unsheltered rays of the sun, which to us would have been death. There was plenty of laughing and fun going on among these happy beings, and I thought, as the sounds came across the water, of the miserable fate which would have been theirs had we not rescued them from slavery.

Near at hand, leaning over the side, the slave captain was watching his lost ship and her human cargo with very different feelings to mine, if one might judge from the gloomy expression on his dark stern features.

I had not seen this man since he fired the pistol-shot which so nearly cost my poor messmate, Forrester, his life. Taller than most Spaniards, he certainly was a fine specimen of a fine race. Just then, his eye meeting mine, he raised his hat, offering me a cheroot, with the courteous greeting of his country —

"*Beso usted los maños*"—(I kiss your Excellency's hands).

I returned the salute, but declined the cigar. He replaced his hat, but in doing so the smile of courtesy suddenly left his face. I noticed the cause: his hand had touched a large bruise on his forehead, the impression left by Moore the quartermaster's big fist, on the night of the slaver's capture.

Diego Alvaranja—so he called himself—impatiently pulled the hat down over his brows in a vain attempt to hide the dishonouring spot, and was beginning a little speech expressing his regret that "*el Señor teniente's*" (Forrester's) wound was so severe, when Captain Dentloup, who was walking the quarter-deck, called me to his side.

"You had a hard fight to capture that schooner. Do you think I could trust you to carry her to St. Helena?"

"Oh, yes, sir," I exclaimed, joyfully.

"Well, I believe you can do it. You are well up in your navigation, and you shall have Moore and another steady old petty officer to look after your men; and really, now that Mr. Forrester is wounded, I cannot spare a lieutenant."

The captain now held a confab with the first lieutenant, and the result was that I received orders to be ready to sail that evening.

We had plenty to do during the day. Six picked men well armed were given me as prize crew, besides the two quartermasters, Moore, and an Irishman named O'Brien, who had been coxswain of the "first gig" when the slaver was taken. At the last moment the doctor said that Forrester's wound would heal so much quicker in the fresh breezes of the Atlantic than if he were kept on board the cruiser, that he had better bear us company. The idea of having my old messmate as a companion, although a disabled one, was delightful: we lifted him, cot and all, carefully into the boat, rowed to the schooner, and laid him down comfortably in one of the sleeping-berths (there were two) in the schooner's cabin.

When I got on deck after this, my chest was being hoisted in from a boat alongside. It was rather a big one, and the first lieutenant often grumbled at it, as being much too large for a midshipman's chest. But I was captain now, and there was no one to growl as I ordered my own

first lieutenant, Moore, to stow it away in the cabin, which with some difficulty, and after taking off the skylight, was managed.

Then telling Moore to loose sails and shorten-in cable ready for weighing, I pulled back to the *Planet* for my last instructions.

"Now, Murray," said Captain Dentloup, "here are your written orders, which, as you will see, are simply 'to convey the schooner—name unknown—prize to Her Majesty's ship *Planet*, to St. Helena, and deliver her up to the Marshal of the Prize Court for adjudication as a slaver.' I have said nothing as to the vessel being a pirate, for although there is little doubt of the fact, it is difficult to prove legally. The slave captain and two of his crew must go with you, as the Prize Court will want to examine them. I would not send the Spaniard if it could be avoided, for I don't half like his looks; it strikes me that if he has a chance of revenging himself, he will seize it; so be careful."

"All right, sir, I will look after him."

"Well, mind you do. And now good bye, and God bless you."

The good old captain shook my hand warmly, and at length I escaped from the hearty farewell grasps of the many friends, men as well as officers, who crowded the gangway. There was a very queer feeling about my eyes as I turned round in the boat for a parting glance at the ship that had been my floating home for the better part of three years, but it all went away as soon as I jumped on the deck of the schooner, *my* schooner now, in one sense.

"Up with the anchor, men, cheerily."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered O'Brien, going forward, while Moore stood by the helm.

Now, our crew was rather a small one, and although they "hove with a will," yet after a few turns the windlass stuck fast. I ordered the two Spanish sailors to lend a hand, which they obeyed pleasantly enough. We got another half-turn, but that was all; the handspikes bent under the men's hands, but the anchor was immovable.

"Let me give 'em a song, sir, merchant-ship fashion, and we will soon get it up," said O'Brien.

"Very well, strike up." And the quartermaster began an old forecastle ditty:—

"Then up jumped the shark with his five rows of teeth,
Oh! he jumped up aloft and he shook out a re-ef."

"Now then, chorus, boys, and heave together.

"Blow the wind westerly, gentle sou-westerly,
Blow the wind westerly, steady she go-o-es."

With the last words of the chorus, all heaving in time, a good half-turn was gained, the cable was stretched taut as a harp-string. O'Brien continued :—

"Then up jumped the whale, the biggest of a-ll,
Oh ! he jumped up aloft and he let the sail fa-all.
Blow the wind westerly, gentle sou-westerly,
Blow the wind westerly, steady she go-o-es."

Again the men strained—handspikes bent—the windlass creaked,—and at length with a sudden jerk the chain cable came rattling in through the hawse-holes, and the reluctant anchor, up-dragged from its miry bed, was run up cheerily to the bows.

By this time it was nearly sunset, and the sea-breeze was fast dying away, but enough remained to fill our sails as we passed under the *Planet's* stern. The cruiser's men were in the rigging watching us, but so still and silent were all on board both vessels, that the only sound heard was the gentle ripple at our bows. I lifted my cap to Captain Dentloup, who was looking over the side, and lowered our ensign in respectful farewell. Then the schooner's head was turned as closely as the wind would allow, on the glorious pathway of crimson cast upon the waters by the westerling sun.

The last puff of wind left us as the sun sank below the horizon, and a dead calm succeeded. I suppose there are few things at sea more unpleasant than a calm ; a regular stiff gale of wind is far more endurable. "Jack" laughs at a gale with a good ship under him, plenty of sea-room, and no fear of a lee-shore. "More rain, more rest" is an old man-of-war adage, and the saying holds good for wind also.

When sail is shortened and the ship made snug, Jack may take his ease in his mess below, or under the lee of the boats, if it should be his watch on deck. There are no drills, which are his abomination—no pipe "Clean wood and brass work," with which a fidgety first lieutenant tortures his soul.

But in a calm there is no peace. The ship, having no wind to keep her steady, performs the wildest evolutions as the long swell, which always prevails at sea even when the surface is unruffled, rolls her heavily first to starboard, then to port. On deck, masts and yards are creaking and jerking, sails flapping, heavy shot hopping out of the racks, rolling from side to side, smashing the unlucky fingers and shins of any one trying to stop them, and at last falling down the hatchways to the imminent danger of those below. A broadside gun, too, will sometimes break loose during a heavy lurch, and then, unless the wheels of the gun-

carriage be cleverly jammed by hammocks, the heavy mass topples over the hatchways, and starts a plank in the ship's bottom. Down below, the noise and confusion is even greater than on deck, although mingled with more of the ludicrous.

The cabin bulkheads creak and groan, each separate board or partition having its own distinctive and discordant voice. Officers and stewards are in despair as the sound of smash upon smash shows that the mess crockery is getting "small by degrees and beautifully less;" while on the lower deck the men, although they try to save their plates and basins, yet think it only fun when they *will* jump off the shelves and be smashed. A sailor can always use his biscuit as a plate, and then, as he eats it afterwards, the trouble of cleaning up is saved.

We had about two hours of this sort of work in the schooner, and the poor negroes suffered terribly. Captain Dentloup had taken the women and the weakly ones on board the *Planet*; still there were nearly two hundred left, and they lay about the decks helpless and miserable, greatly in the way of our men, who, however, took it good-humouredly enough, and tried to make the poor creatures eat their supper of rice and calavances. At length the land-wind, damp and fever-laden from the mangrove swamps of the coast, reached us, the sails filled, the rolling ceased, and the ship's head was laid straight to her course, St. Helena being distant—as I had worked out on one of the slaver's own charts spread out on the cabin table—W.S.W. 1,200 miles.

"If we get into the south-east Trade to-morrow," I thought, "we ought to do it in eight days." And then I walked the weather side of the quarter-deck, enjoying the novel feeling of being really in command, and of a ship too that had been won in fair fight. Let my excuse be that I was only a midshipman and sixteen years old. The bright stars of the "Southern Cross" were high in the heavens, but after two or three years' absence from England one begins to feel home-sick, and to long for the time when this constellation shall disappear, and the well-known form of the "Great Bear" once more show itself on the northern horizon.

Eight bells (twelve o'clock) struck. O'Brien with three men relieved Moore and his three for the middle watch, and I stopped in my walk, tired enough, to go below. The slave captain was still on deck, so I spoke to him civilly.

"Señor Capitano, will you not join us in the cabin?"

"No, Señor *muchos gracias*, it is my custom to sleep on deck—always with your permission."

Well, it certainly would be highly disagreeable having the fellow in the cabin, but then it was equally unpleasant to leave him on deck hatching mischief, probably ; and yet I hardly liked to adopt the safer plan of keeping him in irons during the night. I contented myself at last with telling O'Brien to keep his eye upon the captain, and on no account to allow any talking between him and the two other Spanish sailors.

The little cabin, on going below, felt hot and stifling. Forrester was sleeping quietly, but his face looked pale and yellow in the glimmer of the little brass lamp which hung from the deck overhead. The lamp itself was covered with big cockroaches sucking away at the oil, and as it swung with the ship's motion, an extra jerk now and then dislodged some of these loathly creatures, who fell *tap, tap*, on the table, and then crawling to the edge, opened their wings, and flew up again for another taste of the dainty. It is not nice, killing these pests of the tropics, for the insupportable odour from their bodies renders them worse almost in death than in life. Sailors say too, "where one dies, two come to the funeral." The cabin altogether was neither clean nor inviting. I lay down in my clothes, not liking to undress, but slept at last, although for a long time every sound on deck made me start up, thinking something was going wrong.

II.

I WAS on deck early in the morning after our first night in the prize, and found that the breeze off shore had left us after doing its duty and carrying the schooner well to the westward out of sight of land. We had plenty to do all that day washing decks and cleaning the ship. In two or three hours she began to look decent, although the blood-spots where the dead and wounded had fallen during the fight would not wash out, but had to be scraped clean off.

"White is the glassy deck, without a stain," I spouted to Forrester when we piped to dinner at twelve o'clock.

"Well, why don't you go on with your quotation," he replied :—

" 'Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone chieftain, who majestic stalks
Silent and feared by all—not oft he talks'; "

but you *do* talk, and that hop-skip-and-a-jump which you call walking, is anything but majestic, so you make a poor 'lone chieftain' after all, Murray. But I will tell you who does look like one, and that is our gloomy friend Don Diego; mind he does not play the part in earnest."

"Oh, I'll look after the Don. And now, that you may get up your strength to fight him when the time comes, I will just trouble you to eat half this fowl. As for the chieftaincy, why, when the return mail comes out after Captain Dentloup's despatch, you will be a lieutenant with a pair of epaulettes on your shoulders, and I—poor little middy—will have to touch my cap and say, 'Sir.'"

"Yes, I shall be glad of that. I don't mean your salute, you egregious—midshipman, you; but the lieutenant's commission."

And he went on to tell of a mother and sister in a Devonshire village who had hitherto pinched themselves to help him. "But now," he said, "it will be hard if I cannot live, when promoted, on a hundred a year, giving them the odd eighty."

We had a brilliant afternoon this second day of our voyage; a light wind from the south sent us merrily along about four knots an hour. Sky and water were alike "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue." Shoals of flying-fish played round the ship, pursued by dolphin and bonita. One rose so high that he came on board, striking the astonished quartermaster at the helm full on the forehead, and then falling, fluttering and helpless, on the deck. We managed to harpoon a dolphin, and with some difficulty got him on board. And there on the forecastle the poor fish lay a-dying, while we standing round watched his lovely colours changing until, as he drew his last gasp, all faded into a cold leaden hue. I pitied him, yet he furnished the men with a good supper, nor was my compassion strong enough to make me refuse my own share, although, truth to tell, it was horribly dry and tasteless.

Towards evening the pleasant weather changed, the wind went down, the blue sky became overcast, the clouds thickening in dense dark masses until they seemed almost to touch the mast-heads. Denser still, on the eastern horizon, a dark arch, illumined now and then by flashes of forked lightning, was increasing in size, covering the heavens with a pall. Then we knew the tornado was coming. We shortened all sail, sent the poor frightened slaves below out of harm's way, and awaited its approach.

A few moments of anxious suspense, and the storm, hissing and roaring over the waters, struck the schooner, throwing her, in its first outburst of fury, nearly on her beam-ends. With a howl of terror, the blacks, thinking the vessel was sinking, struggled on deck. A wave curling over the lee-side, which was nearly under water, caught one poor fellow and carried him overboard. I saw his upturned face with implor-

ing eyes, as he floated past, and seizing a rope, threw it at him. He caught the end, and one of the men coming to my help, we began to haul in. As we were scarcely making any way through the water, he managed to hold on; gradually we hauled him up, first close astern, then alongside almost within reach of our arms. I leaned over to grasp his hand—touched it. But at the moment the schooner, which had all the while been heeling over so frightfully, suddenly righted, gathered way, and began to scud swiftly before the wind. The unhappy wretch, hope thus snatched away, still held on, and was dragged forcibly in our wake a few yards astern. I watched him with fearful interest. Now a wave, breaking over his face, would cover him, then again his whole form would be visible, ever with both arms over his head grasping the rope. Oh! it was too horrible, to see a fellow-creature struggling thus against a fearful death, and to be powerless to help! We dared not attempt to haul in, it would but hasten the end. The strain was already more than he could bear.

In another minute the struggle was over. The rope, torn from his grasp by the increasing speed of the ship, came home in our hands, and the poor negro—slave no longer—his dying cry borne away by the fury of the storm unheard save by Him who is the Father of all His creatures, black or white—

"Sank into the depths with a bubbling groan
Without a grave, unknelt, uncoffined, and unknown."

I turned my eyes from the spot where the poor fellow had disappeared, but the picture, which a flash of lightning made distinct, of those two hands upstretched in despairing supplication as he sank, rests for ever in my memory.

At the time, though, all thoughts of the drowned man were soon effaced by our labours for the safety of the vessel. The tornado, as its violence swelled, brought on a heavy chopping sea. Moore and O'Brien took the helm, but the schooner steered so wildly as she drove before the wind, that with all their care they could scarcely prevent her from broaching-to in the trough of the sea. Then the decks were so low, that as we watched the big waves in our wake, tossing and foaming as they chased us, rearing their curling crests above our heads, it seemed at times as if they *must* break over the stern and swamp the little craft.

Meanwhile the slaves, who had rushed on deck in their sudden fright, were got below again, the hatchways and the cabin skylight safely covered and battened down. Not a bit too soon were those precautions taken,

for looking astern, I now saw a wave approaching which it seemed impossible we should escape.

"Secure yourselves, men!" I shouted, clinging to the rigging.

The wave broke. The boat hanging over the stern was smashed to atoms, the very davits snapping like sticks. The schooner staggered under the mass of water that rushed along the deck, and, rising high above the hatchways, carried overboard every movable thing. But the gallant little vessel soon rose again as the water poured from her sides through the scupper-holes, and the danger was over.

In another hour the tornado had spent its force, subsiding into a steady gale from the south-east. This enabled us to carry some sail, and to keep our course. I stopped on deck until an hour before midnight, and then went below, leaving O'Brien and his watch of three men in charge.

"I say, take off the skylight," said Forrester as I came into the cabin; "we shall be smothered before morning."

"Well, just as you like," I meekly rejoined. "Only for my part, I prefer the chance of being smothered, to the certainty of being drowned."

We compromised the matter by leaving the door at the foot of the companion ladder open; and then regularly tired out with the day's work, I threw myself without undressing on the bed.

Half an hour may have passed when some sudden noise woke me, and I started up. Forrester was also sitting up in bed, although I could scarcely distinguish the outline of his figure, the lamp having gone out. We listened. There was a heavy fall, and then the sound of something being dragged along the deck over our heads. I jumped up, ran to the door—it was shut.

"Why, Forrester, have you shut the door?"

"No, indeed, the rolling of the ship must have done it."

I turned the handle, but the door was locked from the outside, nor with all my pushing and straining could I make it move.

"There is foul play in this," I exclaimed at last, "and the Spaniard must be at the bottom of it. Oh, Forrester! how I wish I had taken your advice, and kept that man in irons. If any of our poor fellows have lost their lives through my leniency, I am everlastingly disgraced."

But my brave old messmate soon cheered me up. "Come, there will be time enough to talk when there's no work to be done. Just now what we have to do is to find some way out of this cabin, where we have been

caught like rats in a trap. You used to have a small box of tools in the *Planet*,—I only wish they were in the schooner."

"But they *are* in the schooner, and in this chest too," I joyfully exclaimed; and lifting the lid, I groped about in the dark until the box was found, and in the box priceless treasures in the way of chisels, fine steel saws, and all manner of tools. Forrester seemed to forget all about his wound, and we worked away at the door, stopping now and then in fear lest the sound should betray us, but the gale had not quite gone down, and there was noise enough on deck to cover what we were making. At length there was a hole big enough for my hand. I passed it through, found the key all right in the lock outside, turned it gently, and the door opened.

"Now, then, for a reconnoitre."—I put my foot on the cabin stairs, but in doing so, to my infinite disgust, knocked my head against the hatchway cover, which being fastened down, effectually prevented any getting on deck in that direction.

Baffled by this precaution of the Spaniards, we sat down on the lower step and cast about for other means of escape. The skylight was hopeless, as we knew too well from the care taken to secure it during the tornado. How about the stern windows? There were no real windows, the vessel was too small to have them with safety, but we found their places were supplied by thin shutters or deadlights, painted outside, no doubt, in imitation of panes of glass.

"It strikes me," said Forrester, "that if we can take out that middle deadlight, your lanky body might manage to creep out. There's no room to spare, but luckily midshipman's fare in the *Planet* has not fattened you up overmuch."

"But how if we ship a sea through the hole?"

"Well, we must risk that, but we will take the board out in one piece, and be ready to nail it on again in a moment; one sea won't swamp us."

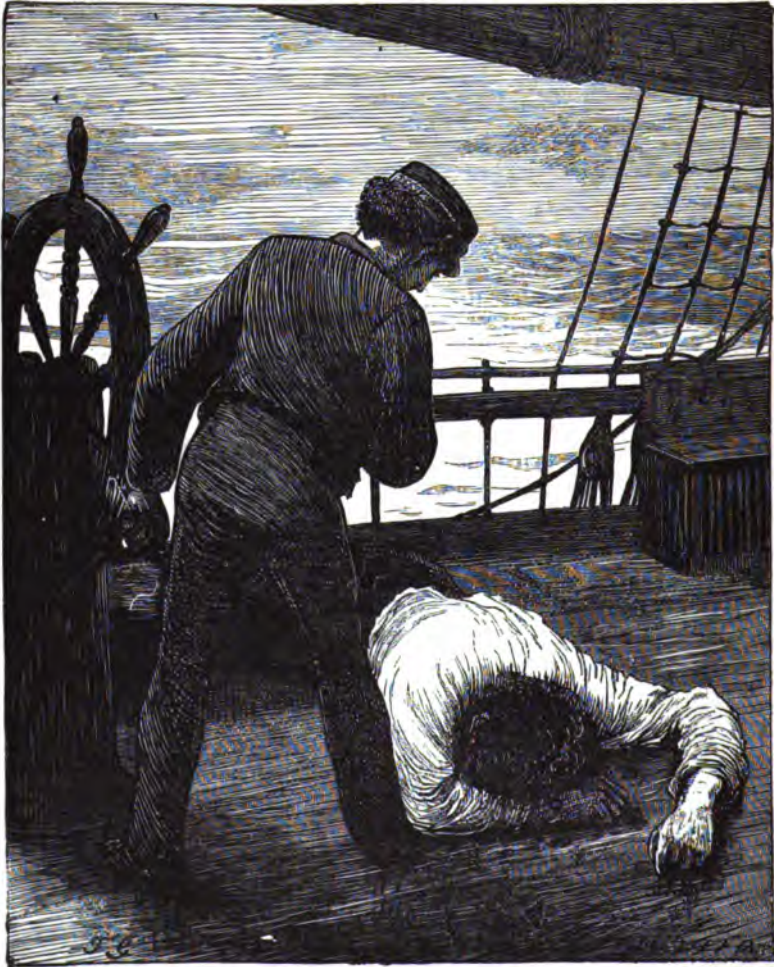
With a thin pointed steel saw apiece, we soon worked round the shutter until it was held by one corner only. Then I carefully reloaded my pistol, one of the large, old-fashioned, navy pattern, with heavy brass-bound handle, placed it in my breast, and grasped Forrester's hand.

"Good bye, old fellow——"

"Better not *do* anything yet, Murray, only look round, and then come back and consult with me."

"All right." But inwardly my resolve was made, if once I gained the deck, never to leave it except as its master.

Then we broke off the piece of wood entirely; but the sea without looked so wild and so dangerously on a level with the opening, that I begged Forrester to 'fasten the' deadlight up again the minute my legs



should be through. Even as we spoke the top of a wave dashed in and flooded the cabin. Before a second one could follow, my head and shoulders were outside. It was a tight fit, but at last my arms were free.

It was a lucky chance that the stern boat had been washed away in the gale, otherwise it would have been hanging overhead right in the way, but now I was able, turning round and facing forward, to take hold of the taffrail with both hands. Then disengaging my feet from the opening, and twisting my legs round the boat's "falls," which were left dangling, I raised my head slowly until I was high enough to look over the stern along the schooner's deck.

It was nearly full moon, so the night, though cloudy, was not dark. I could make out some one standing by the tiller, steering. Not O'Brien, certainly—too tall for him. No! but as certainly the slave captain, Don Diego. I could see no other persons on deck, although there might be some in the bows where it was darker. Now was the time to take the enemy by surprise. I dragged myself up very cautiously, inch by inch, watching him all the while—for if he turned his head all was lost—until at last I was fairly over the taffrail and crouching down still undiscovered on the deck. Something like a bundle of clothes was lying huddled up close by. I looked at it more attentively. It was the poor Irish quartermaster—murdered, no doubt. The sight roused me into intense anger; I jumped up—forgot all caution—seized the pistol by the barrel, and sprang at the Spaniard. He turned round—saw me—put his hand quickly inside his breast—but before he could withdraw it, I had brought the butt-end down with all my force full upon his forehead. His head bent forward upon his breast. Then with one staggering step he fell without a groan, face forward, on the deck.

Scarce was the captain down, when, disturbed by the noise, the two other Spaniards came running aft. I did not care much for these fellows, so pointing the pistol, ordered them to stand; and the cravens at once threw down their knives and cried, "*Misericorde! Señor.*" Then I told them to go forward and uncover the hatchway, at which all this time a tremendous thumping had been going on from below. They obeyed; but when the hatch was about half unfastened, it was pushed up suddenly, capsizing the Spaniards, who were kneeling down to their work—Moore, with the six other imprisoned men, rushed on deck, and the schooner was my own again.

"Now, then, men, down with you into the cabin and nail up the dead-light, or we shall all be swamped."

And indeed it was high time, for the cabin was all afloat, and Forrester exhausted with vain efforts to keep out the sea, while several rats—the vessel was full of rats—were swimming about, thinking their last hour

was come. And so, indeed, it was, as soon as the sailors caught sight of them, although the death they died was not a watery one.

When all was secure below, we were able to think of poor O'Brien. I placed my hand over his heart, and with the utmost thankfulness found that it was beating faintly. He was not dead, but had fainted from loss of blood. A closer examination showed he had been stabbed in the back : a blow meant to be fatal ; but happily the knife had glanced from his shoulder-blade, and the wound, though it looked ugly, was not dangerous. As soon as the quartermaster was able to speak, he told the story of the attempt at recapture. How the three men in his watch, thinking all was safe, had gone below for a smoke ; how the slave captain was looking over the stern, and O'Brien, careless and unsuspecting, was taking no heed of his movements, when suddenly he felt a blow on his back.

"I turned round and saw the murdering villain's face close to me, and after that I don't remember anything at all, sir."

Evidently as soon as O'Brien was disposed of, the cabin hatchway and the one forward had been fastened over our heads. It was a cleverly contrived scheme, but could not have been carried out but for the carelessness of the watch on deck. However, "all's well that ends well." Nobody was killed, and after roundly scolding the men, I made them all happy by promising not to report them on our return to the *Planet*.

Señor Diego now began to move. I was glad the blow had only stunned, not killed him, but felt a horrible repugnance towards the man when Moore pulled out of his breast a clasp knife made dagger fashion, with a catch to secure the blade when open. It was yet moist with O'Brien's blood, and would have been dyed with mine had I been less quick in my attack.

"Put him in irons, Moore, and his two men with him."

And in irons we kept them until the voyage was ended.

We were able to let the poor blacks have some fresh air now, as wind and sea were both going down. The rest of the night I walked the deck. Well, I say I walked, but I believe that during the last hour, although my legs went on marching up and down, *myself* was really fast asleep.

The morning rose bright and glorious after the stormy and eventful night. The trade wind blew steadily and stayed by us for the remainder of the passage. We had no more adventures, nor did we want any. So we sailed, until at sunset of the eighth day the lonely rock of St. Helena rose before us in mid-ocean. I kept as close in as I dared during the

night, and, when daylight broke, steered for the anchorage, which the chart showed we should find off Jamestown.

Mile after mile we coasted along, nothing before us but a lofty wall of rock with the surf dashing at its foot—not an inlet of any sort or a patch of beach where a boat might attempt a landing—until on rounding a point, our delighted eyes suddenly rested on a spot where the rocks, dividing, formed a ravine, broad towards the sea, narrowing as it went up inland. The banks of the ravine were studded with houses and gardens ranged on each side of a street, and above the roofs rose a church spire. To us, who for nearly three years had seen nothing but palm-trees and mangrove swamps, the place seemed like a half-way house to England.

The anchor was dropped, and in a few hours white prisoners and black freemen were safely landed. Then I was free to “have a ride”—the darling wish of every midshipman directly he gets on shore—and mounting a horse, I galloped off towards the tomb where for so many years rested the bones of the great Napoleon.



Y A R N S .

BY A YOUNG SEA-CAPTAIN.

I.

I WENT to sea as a naval cadet when I was twelve. It you think you're ever likely to be twelve, I advise you to do the same.

I can tell you all sorts of yarns about a seafaring life, but I can't put them together into one connected story as a “Memoir” or “Life and Adventures of,” because I'm not a literary character.

During the Crimean War I was midshipman of a large paddle-wheel frigate in the Black Sea: the Russians nicknamed her the “*Black Cat* with the white paws,” because she was painted black and had two white funnels: she could scratch and spit too. I don't recollect what her tonnage was or the length of the main-yard; if you want to know, you must really write and ask the Secretary of the Admiralty; I never can remember that sort of thing. When I passed for a mate, my passing-captains asked me the length or the weight of something, and I told

them I had no head for remembering figures ; but I added that I always wrote down dimensions at the beginning of my log-book. They turned to the page, and found it ruled with red and blue and black lines, and full of figures giving every conceivable weight and length in the ship : they were much impressed by it, and gave me a first-class certificate.

Nowadays a midshipman does not pass for a "mate," he passes for a "sub-lieutenant." I suppose it's thought to be a more genteel name ; but I know I was very proud of being a mate.

The *Black Cat* was at anchor off the Katcha, to the west of Sebastopol, when that terrible gale of wind arose on the 14th of November, 1854. The Katcha is a mere stream draining a broad valley that runs inland to the mountains behind the town ; towards Sebastopol the shore rises steadily, and becomes at last a high cliff, while on the other side of the river it is rocky, with low cliffs here and there. We were anchored pretty close inshore to protect the boats of the combined fleets when they went for water, and from our mast-heads we could see far up the valley. Posted on commanding knolls were the Cossack vedettes, while among the distant trees we sometimes saw troops moving to or from the farm-houses they occupied. Few ships condensed water at that time, and it was considered a wonderful discovery ; the whole fleet got their water by sending their boats to the Katcha.

The gale began in the forenoon, rising steadily and rapidly, and soon one little merchant vessel after another broke adrift. The French transports during the war were mostly small, and several were with the fleet. We watched one of them drag her anchor ; a second was let go and more cable veered ; still she dragged dangerously close to another brig ; the furious howling wind swept sheets of spray over both ships, while captains and crews danced and gesticulated as only Frenchmen could. Then came the smash, and in a moment both ships were drifting to leeward with shattered spars and tattered sails. Nothing could be done to help them : in twenty minutes they struck at the foot of the low cliffs ; in half an hour they were complete wrecks.

Many of these small vessels met the same fate, and many lives were lost, but all the men-of-war held on : the old sailing line-of-battle ships had four anchors down, and their hemp cables out. We're wiser than to use hemp cables in these iron days, but at that time every ship had one supplied to her, probably for the sake of "auld lang syne." The flag-ship was the old *Britannia*, carrying Admiral Dundas's flag, and she was curvetting to every sea with her four cables ahead as rigid as iron

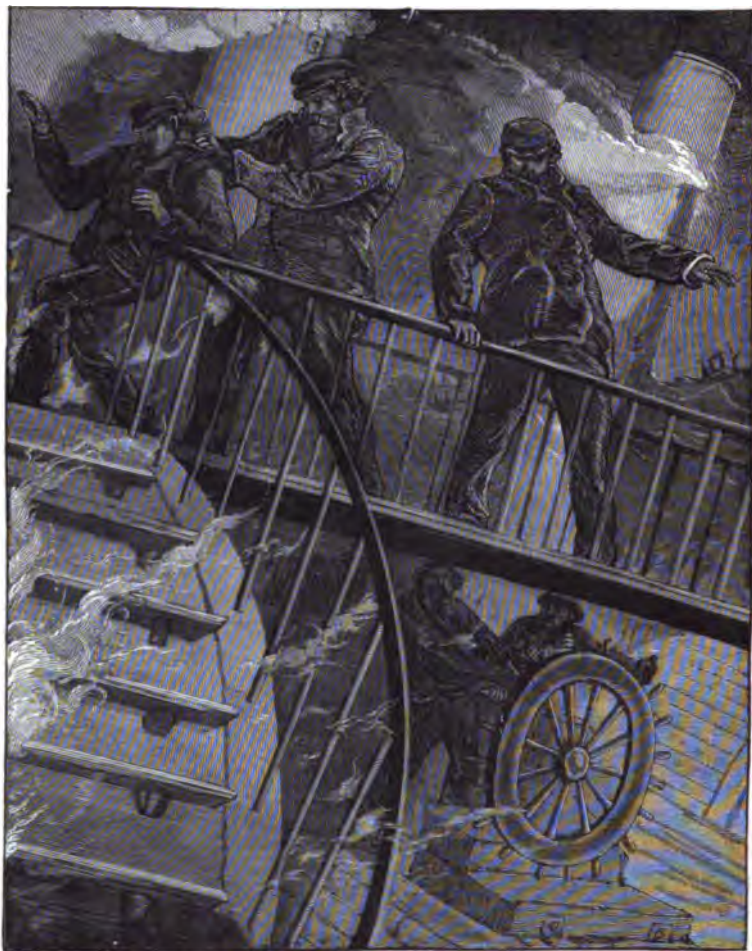
bars. That's not the same as the new *Britannia*, where they dry-nurse the young salts in Dartmouth Ocean.

Meanwhile the steamers of the fleet had got up steam, and were moving their engines slowly ahead to ease the strain on the cables. We were anchored so close inshore that as the gale increased and the sea rose we were almost among the breakers, and now and then a wave broke over the bows and swept right aft along the quarter-deck. Abreast of us was anchored the *Samson*, a paddle-wheel frigate: presently we saw a French barque break from her anchors, and drift down, broadside-on, athwart her hawse. Every moment we expected to see her part her cables: all hands came on deck; from his station on the bridge Captain Lewis T. Jones gave the order for the engines to move faster to meet the increased strain. The barque lay for a few seconds heaving up and down, when a huge sea lifted her under the *Samson's* bowsprit, which broke loose from the gammoning and bobstays, and for an instant stood erect in the air; then, with a crash that could be heard even through the fierceness of the blast, it fell back upon the foremast: instantly the foremast fell back between the two funnels upon the mainmast; the mainmast fell flat upon the mizenmast, and the mizenmast fell over the stern: the French barque, surging clear of the *Samson*, swept on before the blast, and met her doom on the rocks. But the *Samson* held on safely to her anchors: though her decks were crowded with men, but one of her crew was injured, and some of the Frenchmen saved their lives by scrambling on board of her.

But now with a violent jerk both our own cables parted: the ship's head fell off inshore: three or four heavy seas rolled in over the fore-castle, and dashed down the engine-room hatches. "Go ahead full speed!" shouted the captain; but the great cranks remained motionless. Again was the order given, and repeated below, but without result. And now the ship was indeed among the breakers, drifting every moment nearer to the shoal water at the river's mouth: some even took off coat and boots to be ready for a swim, when at length slowly and uncertainly the great wheels began to revolve, and the *Black Cat* to answer her helm. The heavy seas we shipped penetrated to the engine-room, which was soon knee-deep in water; but the engineers and stokers stood gallantly to their posts, even throwing the coal on to the fires with their hands: still the steam-gauge showed no rise: the water continued gaining on them, and at length threatened to extinguish the fires. At this moment, with great presence of mind, one of the engineers knelt down, and by main force lifted an iron flooring-plate, so allowing the water to escape

into the bilge: he saved the ship, and was rewarded by a step of promotion.

And now the great power of the *Black Cat's* magnificent engines began



to tell, as even against the force of that mighty hurricane and those huge rollers her bows came slowly up to the wind, and she steamed out in the teeth of the furious gale.

I was standing on the paddle-box with the captain and master, when

YARNS.

suddenly a sea lifted from its bed the paddle-box boat I was leaning against, landing her a couple of feet outwards, so as the wheel revolved the floats struck the flaps of my monkey-jacket. I must have fallen into the wheel had not the master caught me by the scruff of the neck and dragged me into safety: the next wave again struck the paddle-box, turned the boat completely over, and threw her inboard amidships; we three were knocked down, but, strange to say, not a bit hurt.

There are no masters in the navy now; it was a good old name, and had been borne by many a hearty seaman of the old school, who was to his captain as a tower of strength. Now they have expanded into navigating lieutenants, staff commanders, and staff captains. I don't think they've got to be staff admirals yet. I don't know whether they get more pay, and I haven't heard that they're better men than they used to be. Some people say the line is to be abolished altogether. I'm glad our master hadn't been abolished altogether when I fell against the paddle-wheel.

Well, we steamed out through the fleet against the black driving storm, and kept the sea all that night, and when we returned to the anchorage the next morning it was a sad sight to see the shore strewn with wrecks. A few days later we heard that the army had suffered severely from the gale, and that there had been wrecks elsewhere, but it was not till the newspapers came from England that we realized the foundering of the *Black Prince*, and the awful tragedies of Balaclava Roads. The *Black Cat* was none the worse: we fished up both our lost anchors in the course of a few days, but we never anchored quite so close to the beach again.

II.

It makes all the difference in the world what sort of ship a youngster goes to sea in for the first time. Somewhere about the year 1850, Sir William Parker's flag was flying on board the *Queen*, as commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean. All the youngsters of that ship turned out well; they couldn't help it. I don't suppose there ever was a ship in a higher state of discipline than the *Queen* was during that commission.

My first ship was what was contemptuously called "a jackass frigate," six and twenty guns. None of our youngsters turned out well. The captain was one of the kindest-hearted men that ever breathed, and a clever scientific man too, but he did not know how to command even a jackass frigate. He gave us youngsters the free run of his cabins, and

made believe to teach us navigation himself, but we didn't mind him much. I remember one evening we all made such a row that he threw the candlesticks at us, and then we got under the table in the dark and pinched his legs. Shade of Benbow! a midshipman pinching a post-captain's legs! The ship was on the Australian station when the gold fever broke out; the senior midshipman deserted, and went to the diggings. It was a curious instance of carrying coals to Newcastle, that he forgot to leave the mess cash-box behind him.



The success of a youngster's whole career depends, to a great extent, upon the order and discipline of his first ship, and this rests mainly upon the captain. There's nothing so bad for a youngster as often changing his ship: if you start in a good ship, stick to her. What station you go to matters comparatively little; the Mediterranean is the favourite station, and the fleet is generally in good order; but if you think you have any private interest, don't exert it to be sent to a pleasant station. If you don't go to the West Indies, somebody else must—somebody quite as tenderly loved at home, and probably not more robust than yourself. If you enter your country's service and draw your country's pay, your sense of honour and generosity tells you you are equally bound to peril your health or life, whether the danger be yellow fever or an enemy's guns. Duty is in itself noble. You remind me that there is a higher duty, which includes our duty to our country. Yes.

Of course a youngster's first two or three days in the Bay of Biscay are very poor fun. I remember sitting between two guns on the side of the main deck, with a bucket before me, and even wishing I were again alone with Dr. Vaughan, in the fourth-form room at Harrow, or anywhere on dry land. But at twelve years of age sea-sickness soon passes off, and the crisp air of blue water gives life with each breath; and when I was

all right again, it was great fun for the older midshipmen to catch me aloft, and lash me in the rigging until I paid some forfeit. This admirable custom, which is called "paying your footing," is very old, and prevails on dry land in some places, as well as at sea; but sailors never call it a *douceur*, or a *honorarium*, or goodwill, or commission, or fee, or fixtures at a valuation. There are other nautical customs, more or less prevalent among midshipmen, whose laudable object appears to be to impress the new-comer with a sense of his inferiority: one of these is, that every naval cadet must on first joining have his nose slit. I remember at Harrow, in Dr. Vaughan's house, every new boy had either to sing a song or drink a glass of "tolly-water." Now, tolly-water is water in which a tallow candle has been hastily extinguished. If it is true that the boy is the father of the man, how much more of the midship-man! I have known a bench of worshipful magistrates, with a nickname and a penalty of champagne for a newly-fledged brother beak.

Have you pictured to yourself what it must be to have your nose slit? The three ugliest things in the British navy are said to be a big midshipman, a young quartermaster, and a small piece of pork. Imagine two big midshipmen holding down a curly-haired darling, while a third neatly divides the cartilage of the nose with a purser's razor, and allows the two flaps to fall back on each damask cheek; imagine all this, and you will have no idea of what really takes place. Two or three of the senior midshipmen, not one of whom has probably undergone the operation himself, inform the youngsters that this is an invariable custom; that they had themselves to submit to it; that it will be of no use to appeal to the captain or first lieutenant, as they will not interfere; that it is not likely to make them ill for more than a few days; and so on. Then, if possible, a box of surgical instruments is borrowed, and displayed with razors, towels, sponges, and a basin of water. Then the youngsters are admitted one at a time, and the smallest possible scratch made on the end of the nose with a penknife, just enough to draw blood, which is made the most of on a towel for the benefit of the next customer. But I believe this innocent and playful initiation is now seldom practised: let us hope the midshipmen of the period are not the less manly or gentlemanlike for its disuse.

Part of my midshipman's life was spent in a fifty-gun frigate, one of the crack ships of her day; the captain was a sailor, every inch of him; as the saying runs, every hair of his head was a rope-yarn, and every drop of blood the best Stockholm tar. But he was a taut hand: if the other

ships of the squadron beat us reefing topsails or shifting spars, he would pretty well make the men jump out of their skins, and the officers too. I've seen mates aloft in that ship exercising in their cocked hats and epaulettes.

Our first lieutenant had no sinecure ; of course he was expected to know all about everything, and was held responsible for the discipline of the ship. Why, only to look after the midshipmen was enough to make him prematurely old ! On board a man-of-war there is a court held on the main deck every morning at half-past eleven, where the first lieutenant is judge and jury ; very serious offences are reserved to be dealt with by the captain. Now, we had a particularly good band, and an affected bandmaster who used to talk in a languid way about "the gentlemen of the band ;" and it came to pass that one day the sergeant of the band got drunk, and came to blows with one of "the gentlemen of the band : " of course he was placed in confinement by the master-at-arms, and brought up before the first lieutenant the next morning. Maudlin and seedy, he urged this remarkable defence : " Please, sir, he've a-seized me by the 'air of the 'ed, and he've a-dragged me three times round the lower deck ; and now I astes you, sir, is that treatment for a gen'lleman ? "

Sometimes even more difficult cases, with conflicting evidence, come before the first lieutenant for solution. One day, at the usual hour, seven bells, two men were brought for fighting on the lower deck the previous evening, just after the hammocks had been piped down.

" Well," said the first lieutenant to one of them, a sleek, mutton-faced man, " what have you to say about this ? "

" Please, sir," he replied, " Bill were a-sittin' under my billet when I cum down with my 'ammick, and I says to him, says I, ' Bill,' says I, ' will you be so kind as to be so good as to be so obliging as to move a little a one side while I 'angs my 'ammick up ? ' Them, sir, is the werry words I spoke ; and with that, sir, he ups with his fist and 'its me right in the heye."

" And you," said the first-lieutenant to the other man, " what have you to say ? "

" If you please, sir, it worn't a-nothink o' the sort ; he come up to me where I were a-sittin', and he says to me, ' Hout, you beggar, hout, or I'll knock your eye out ! ' "

So curiously does the same thing strike different people from different points of view.

You landmen have little idea of the change steam has made in the navy. When there were only a few steamers attached to the fleet, we could generally tell the officers, the men, or the boats of a smoke-jack, wherever we might see them : we used to declare they were smutty and unclean, and smelt of melted tallow. It had not then been found out that a steamer could be and ought to be kept as clean as a sailing-ship. We were lying in Besika Bay, the French and English fleets together, when we first saw a screw line-of-battle ship ; and I think every officer and man in both fleets crowded on deck to see the *Napoléon* steam into the anchorage. The first English screw-liner to join the fleet was the *Sanspareil*, a miserable tub ; and then came Sir Edmund Lyons in his flag-ship the *Agamemnon* : she was a magnificent two-decker, and right well did she maintain the glory of her name, formerly that of Nelson's ship. Now, alas ! we are building ships with no masts at all, and heavy iron plates fastened to a timber backing ; but still our hearts of oak are the only backing that will support our country's honour.

III.

CRUISING with the Mediterranean fleet, before the Russian War, was very like yachting : the admiral's wife often accompanied him to sea in his flag-ship, where she had her drawing-room, her suite of private apartments, and better accommodation than many houses in Mayfair. The admiral had generally officers from other ships to dine with him, so whatever news there was circulated at his table. In calm weather, leave was sometimes given for the officers of different ships to visit each other. Life had no particular object : European politics were stagnant ; we were all in the placid enjoyment of full pay ; the Mediterranean command was regarded as an easy and honourable berth for some elderly gentleman who had well served his party, and was therefore supposed to have well served his country. There was a tacit understanding that the Admiralty would not interfere with the commander-in-chief if he would not bother them for ships and men and stores.

And so these great wooden castles floated lazily about on the blue waters of the Mediterranean, anchoring for a week or two at Athens, Smyrna, Gibraltar, or any place of interest. If foul or light winds prolonged our cruise, and the hay for the admiral's cow began to run short, then it became necessary that England should be informed what had become of our Mediterranean fleet : the signal is made to a steamer to

get up steam to take despatches to the nearest port, and a general signal announces that an opportunity offers of sending letters to England ; the admiral's steward, and probably a steward from every ship, goes on board, and as she steams away we envy them their trip. The next morning we watch for the smoke of the returning steamer, and welcome the stewards, who are laden with milk, butter, fresh meat and vegetables, and a newspaper or two.

A storm at sea has probably been oftener described than a calm, but in the days of sailing-ships a calm was sometimes quite as vexatious : utterly unmanageable, the ponderous old line-of-battle ships got into the trough of the sea, and shipping water in at the main-deck ports, seemed as if they would roll bottom up ; the sails that were set in the vain attempt to steady the ship flapped and banged themselves to pieces against the rigging, and every block and every rope chattered ; the guns had to be secured as for a gale of wind. Sometimes two ships would drift so dangerously close to each other that the boats of the fleet had to be sent to tow them apart, and any little catspaw of wind to give the ships steerage way was most welcome.

In 1852 the fleet consisted of five line-of-battle ships, and used to cruise with two or three frigates, and perhaps the same number of paddle-wheel steamers ; but the latter were often under sail with their wheels disconnected, so we numbered about ten ships for any evolutions or naval tactics. There was generally a certain amount of drill daily, regulated by signal from the flag-ship. A day with a light steady breeze would be devoted to firing at a target ; the ships spread all over the horizon, that each may have a clear area for practising. The targets are made of a cask with a flag-staff driven into the bung-hole : every ship sails round and round her own, blazing away broadside after broadside, shot, shell, shrapnel, grape, and canister tearing up the foaming sea around. When the ship is firing at long range and rolling about, the cask has a very fair chance. I have known it bob up and down unhurt in the seething water all day, mockingly nodding its little red flag, but when brought on board in the evening it was pretty sure to show traces of its late peril. Firing at a mark with pistols or rifles may be practised at any time : the target is usually a bottle (empty) hung by a long piece of spun yarn from the foreyard-arm, and he is a proud man who succeeds in smashing it.

On fine evenings we anxiously watched the flag-ship, hoping for the signal to bathe : when this was made, the fleet came to the wind to-

gether, and hove-to; as soon as each ship had shortened sail with main-yard squared, a boat was lowered to attend the bathers, and the boat-swain's mates piped "hands to bathe." In a few minutes there would be hundreds of men in the water, swimming, rolling, and splashing like a school of porpoises: one is seen diving head first from the fore-yard, another from the chains, while the cautious or timid slide down a rope's end or Jacob's ladder. Now we hear a general shout of laughter as a hapless wight, intending to take a header and cleave the water like an arrow, comes down with a loud clap like a soup-plate. When the signal is again made, the bugles sound, the men come scrambling inboard, the attendant boats are hoisted up, the yards are trimmed, sail is made, and the fleet proceeds on its way.

These were the good old days. I was always told then that "the service had gone to the dogs since pepper and mustard were served out." I often hear now that the service has gone to the dogs since something or another has happened; but my informant always takes care to fix some date that shall not include himself. It was my good fortune to enter the service just before pepper and mustard became part of the daily rations; so, you see, I really am a salt of the olden time. The good old days had their charms, certainly, and there is some truth in the lament :

"When sailors fed on mouldy bread
And lumps of rusty pork,
No Frenchman dared his nose to show
Between the Downs and Cork ;
But now that Jack gets beef and greens,
And next his skin wears flannel,
We 've not an ironclad to show
In plight to keep the Channel."

One afternoon, when we were sailing in line of battle, with a steady breeze, the signal was hoisted for the fleet to heave-to; we anxiously watched the flag-ship to see the cause of the stoppage, when to my astonishment I saw my own name flying at her mast-heads: the admiral had recollected a request I made a short time before to be transferred to another ship, and this was the signal that my request was granted. I had forgotten all about it, and thought that the admiral had so too, and was not in the least prepared. Of course, it became now a point of honour for my captain to show how smart he could be in obeying the signal: you may suppose he was not particularly well pleased at my wishing to go, and did not think what my feelings were likely to be; indeed, I never heard that a midshipman was allowed to have feelings. I

rushed down to pack my things up; there was my proverbial midshipman's-chest, "everything uppermost, and nothing at hand;" my mess-mates did what they could to help me, jumping on the lid when it hopelessly gaped; a cutter was lowered and manned; in ten minutes my chest was hoisted out, and with all my worldly goods I was pulled towards my new home. From every ship telescopes were levelled at me to discover what belonged to this name which had been advertised as the reason of delay to the whole fleet: for the moment I knew and felt what it was to have greatness thrust on me; but in a few minutes my chest was again swinging in the air, myself and my traps were passed on board my new ship, and in half an hour the fleet had made sail again. Of course I left a great many things behind; some I did not get back for weeks, others I am still in search of; some chocolate and a silver fork I at once abandoned all hope of.

It was dreary enough to find myself suddenly dropped into a new world among perfect strangers. I was at once put into a watch, and found my duty would begin that night, from midnight till 4 A.M. At twelve o'clock I came on deck; my watchmates were friendly enough, and at once proposed that we should make some coffee. With the senior midshipman of the watch I went down to the gun-room.

"Now," said he, "you bring the spoons and the coffee, and I'll bring the cups and saucers."

I thought it very considerate of him to offer to carry the fragile china; and so it afterwards proved. We made our coffee successfully, and at four o'clock went to bed again. The next morning at seven I was washing in the cockpit in scant apparel, when the senior mate of the mess came forward with a dog-whip.

"Which of you youngsters was it took silver spoons out of the mess last night?"

I innocently confessed that I had: he then slowly and carefully explained to me that it was contrary to the rules of the mess, and that I must not forget it: he emphasized his remarks and pointed his observations with repeated cuts of his dog-whip, and so, you see, I have not forgotten it unto this day.

Making coffee in the night watches was one of the principal employments of the youngsters. Sometimes we had "conjurers" to make it in; but as the conjuror only made a little at a time, and as the spirits of wine for the lamp was expensive, we oftener lighted a small fire in a corner of the galley-range, and made it in a saucepan. The cook did

not always approve of having his saucepans dirtied : one night, when I went as usual to make coffee, I found he had locked up everything except a frying-pan. I went to the mate of the watch, and told him : his memorable answer was, "Youngster, if you don't make some coffee, you'll be licked." With a heavy heart and a shallow frying-pan I set about my task, and at last succeeded in producing a smoked infusion of coffee-grounds. I brought it on deck to the midshipmen of the watch, who were surreptitiously smoking their cigars between the boom-boats : they desired me to keep it hot till they had finished their smoke. In vain I pleaded that coffee would not retain its caloric in a coverless frying-pan. "If it gets cold you'll be licked," was the answer. I will not linger over the harrowing details : it *did* get cold, and those prophetic words were literally fulfilled.

These are some of my "Professional Recollections of Seamanship and Discipline," to borrow the title of a well-known book. These are some of the incidents of life in that Mediterranean fleet, whose like we ne'er shall see again, and whose softly pensive career was rudely broken in upon by the Russian War.



THE IGUANA'S EYES.

AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

"WHERE are you going, father?" said a little fair, flaxen-haired, blue-eyed girl to a brown bushman, who was taking the bridle of his stock-horse off the hook in the verandah-post.

"To hunt up the sick cow, poor old Jenny—your pet, you know, my poppet. She's gone missing somehow."

"Oh, let me go with you, father."

"You would be tired to death, my blossom."

"I must go and find Jenny, father,—all alone in the bush," and as the child said it she shuddered and burst out crying. "That sad sunny bush, all so silent and still ; those sly grey old trees—what a place to be ill in ! Father," the child whispered, "the sly trees are always thinking bad secrets, I know. They're afraid to speak plain in the daytime, but they mutter sometimes as if they did all kinds of naughty things when the sun is away. Poor dear old Jenny, lying out there in the dark with those

wicked old trees ! She'll go mad. I *must* go and look for her, father. *She'd* have looked after *me*."

"You shall go with me, my blossom," said the bushman. "Tie on your bonnet. Tut ! my little woman, your cheeks are quite wet."

He swung himself on to the back of his high horse, lifted up his little girl behind him, and cantered off into the bush, of which his daughter was afraid even when her little arms were tight round her father's waist. She did not know whether she were more afraid of the bush, as she saw it by day, or as she fancied it by night. When she woke up in her little cot, and thought of the great sea of wood that spread, dusky or moonlit, all round their little clearing, she glanced fearfully at the window, as if the bush must be angrily ordering her to get up and come out to it. But it beckoned to her in the daytime also, only slyly, and perhaps she dreaded it most then, because it *was* so sly, beckoning when her father was out of the way, or so that he could not see it. The little girl's mother was dead. Her only female friend was the cow Jenny. Sometimes when her father was away, and the bush had been beckoning very hard, she could not help sidling up to it, as if she were being drawn into it. She did not want to go near it, but it made her. Sometimes even she *had* been drawn into the bush a little way, and then had rushed back in terror into the cow-house or the paddock, to fling her arms round Jenny's neck, and cling to her, and sob as if her little heart were breaking, until the sweet-breathed old cow somehow managed to comfort her. The thought that her kind friend had got into her enemy's power made Eppie very miserable and very brave. It would be so mean, she thought, to stay at home and do nothing for her friend. And then, perhaps, she thought too—not quite so bravely—what should she do if she stayed at home, and the bush began to beckon when her father and Jenny were both away ? Much as she dreaded the bush, moreover, she could not help thinking that it would be half pleasant to go right into it when it could not hurt her. She was almost sure that the bush was afraid of her father, because it beckoned behind his back. She was not *quite* sure, because her father talked as if something terrible might happen to her if she wandered into the bush, but still *he* went into it and came out of it, and the bush never hurt him, and so she half made up her mind that it would not dare to hurt her, so long as she held on tight to him.

Holding very tight, she cantered in the sweltering noontide hush into the mysterious territory, which was a slyly wicked *person* to her. If the horse had not cantered, there would have been no breeze. The ragged

bark of the grey trees hung motionless in the day-dreamy sunlight. Their metallic leaves latticed the red cracked ground, and great boils of ant-hills, with lines of shadow that did not move a hair's breadth. The scrub, the colour of a seedy rifleman's uniform, was so still that it seemed to have been suffocated by its own warm aroma. The silver-grey logs, with which the chapped earth was littered, looked as if they had lain there for ever. The trees stood farther apart: there was far more light in the bush than Eppie had expected; but that very light had such a bewitched look, that Eppie grew more afraid of the bush than ever—it could keep even the sunshine prisoner. Everything was so strangely still. The hum of insects could not be always heard, and when it was heard it made the other silence seem all the more spellbound. A black snake writhed noiselessly out of the horse's way. Jewel-eyed little lizards that had been basking on the black jagged tree-stumps slipped back lithely into their holes without making one piece of charcoal rattle against another. A hang-dog-eyed dingo turned on his heels, and slunk back into the scrub as silently as he had come out of it. Once a flock of screaming cockatoos flew overhead, flecking the goldenly blue sky with its only spots of white; once or twice a flock of paroquets and lowries—green, crimson, purple, scarlet—flashed, screaming, athwart the glittering grey branches; but when they were gone—and they seemed to be gone in a second—the hush, that the stock-horse's hoofs alone were left to break, appeared more trance-like than before.

The bush, in its quiet daylight way, began to beckon to Eppie so triumphantly, that, had not its spell of silence been on her too, she would have shrieked to her father to gallop home. "I've got you in, and now I'll keep you," was what the bush said. "You're very proud of your father; you pretend to be very fond of him, and very much afraid of me, but see if I don't make you run away from him to me. You really came to see me, and not to look after Jenny, you know." When the bush whispered that, with a wink, poor little Eppie sobbed so, and hugged her father so hard, that he pulled up his horse, and said, "You're fagged out, my little one. Here, I'll take you before me, my wee woman, and we'll go home at once. Old Jenny must find her own way home." Little Eppie felt safer when she sat between her father's big brown-handed arms; but when she had got there, she would not hear of giving up the search for Jenny. "Oh, please father, go on looking," she said. "Don't let poor old Jenny, dear old Jenny, stay out in the nasty bush all night, it *is* so wicked."



The bushman smoothed the wet curls out of his little daughter's eyes, patted the top of her sun-bonnet soothingly, gave her an affectionate squeeze with his bony wrists, and to humour her went on looking for his cow. They hunted here, they hunted there, and all the time the bush kept on beckoning when Eppie turned her head, and whispering and winking more and more triumphantly. At last the bush said, "You'll never find Jenny if you don't ride behind your father, and look out one way whilst he looks out the other. I'll kill Jenny; but of course I shall tell her that it was really you who killed her. If you tell your father what I've said I'll kill you and him too, proud as you are of him. You may think him big, but what is he to me?"

Eppie was too frightened to tell her father what the bush had said, but she asked him, the bush winking wickedly all the while, to let her sit behind him again. Oh, how she held on to him when he had arranged the little pad for her on the crupper! He did not notice how she clung to him, because he had lost most of his last night's rest, and so was getting sleepy. He began to nod, and presently, having nodded almost into his horse's mane, he drew rein, and said, "It's no use going any farther, Eppie. We must go back now. It will be sundown in half an hour."

They were at the top of a lonely stony ridge then, on which it seemed strange that even the few gum-trees, comparatively dwarfish as they were—not more than eighty or ninety feet—could have managed to grow so high.

He nodded off again as he pulled round his horse's head.

As they rode down the ridge Eppie saw what she had never seen before—an iguana. A lizard ten feet long, with scales the colour of brown mud and a tail like a great whip-lash. A wasted, wrinkled-cheeked, big-headed lizard, with eyes as wearily wicked as the Wandering Jew's. It looked thoroughly tired out with witnessing for centuries all the wickedness that it remembered and all that it had forgotten, but thoroughly wicked still, only with a wickedness that got no pleasure out of what it did, but kept on being languidly wicked for mere wickedness' sake. It was noiselessly clambering up a gum-tree, putting out its hideous lantern-jawed head, now on this side of the tree and now on that. Presently it stopped and sullenly stared at Eppie, mesmerizing her with its wearily-wicked old eyes. They were the bush's eyes for her, and at last their horrible attraction had become too powerful for her to resist. Silently she dropped from the horse and wandered away into the still, sunny, barren solitude. Her

father rode on, and did not miss her until he roused himself with a shiver as the sun went down.

The bushman went back on his tracks to the last place in which he was sure that Eppie had been with him, but he could not find her. He cooed, but there came no answer. The bushman's heart was fit to break. He knew that there was little use in hunting for his little girl in the dark, and yet he could not keep still. Round and round he rode until neither his horse nor himself could keep his eyes open. The bushman managed to keep awake long enough to light a fire. He thought it might just possibly be the means of bringing Eppie back to him. "May God guard my pet," he sobbed, and then he fell asleep. Weary with travel and sorrow as he was, he slept until an hour after sunrise.

And what did his eyes open on? Little Eppie was trying to milk Jenny into his quart-pot. They looked quite gay, for round Jenny's horns and her own hat Eppie had twined bush flowers still wet with dew.

"Oh, father," she cried, "the poor bush isn't wicked at all. It took me straight to Jenny, and she was so glad to see me. And the bush has been so kind to us both all night. It doesn't do bad things in the night, but it wakes up, says its prayers, and then it goes to sleep again. I shall never be afraid of the bush any more."



UNCLE BEN, THE OLD MAN-O'-WAR'S MAN.

MY father and mother's family originally belonged to London, but after my father's death my mother removed to the neighbourhood of Chester, where she went shares in a little farm with a sister of hers, whose husband was also dead. 'Tis as pleasant a neighbourhood as you could wish to live in, so be it one had sufficient to rig a comfortable berth on shore, and keep all hands going, without getting into the shop-keeper's books or falling foul of your land-sharks of lawyers. Only I never could fancy trudging about all day over thirty acres of brick-dust after a set of lubberly ploughmen; or keeping the log of a dairy, with nothing before you but to square your accounts at the year's end, and begin again. A sailor has his hardships, but then he's always looking forward; even a foremast-man feels like a prince as he goes round the

craft in harbour, squinting at their different rig, and fighting shy of offers, till he thinks whether he'll go to India, or China, or the West Indies, or to some country he hasn't seen. Then, if a boy with some schooling enters apprentice, and works on steadily, he has the chance of commanding a vessel; and I don't think any one would wish better than to walk his own quarter-deck, and look aloft at the rigging, taut and trim,—canvas touching the wind and never lifting, from course to royal—with her three masts in a line—and steering across the ocean without any one to tell him the way; while all the time no one is his master but God, who rules the winds and the waters!

However, I'm ahead of my story. We lived about seven miles out of the town of Chester, quite in the country, with no more than two or three other houses beside us, though all round about you could see farm-houses, and cottages, and little villages across the fields and river, enough to make all Chester over again, and as different from the town as a channel fleet standing into port is from the shipping in the docks. Our own house was an old-fashioned, queer-built sort of a place, half timbers and half stones; there wasn't one of the windows on a line with another, and the chimneys were as high as the *Maria's* lower masts. It stands at the end of an old green-garden, full of large gean-trees, which lies between it and the market-road; with an orchard besides, and a little paddock to one hand, and a carpenter's wood-yard at the other, where the piles of planks shaking in a windy day would remind you of a ship's bulkheads straining at night in a stiff breeze. All before the door, under the trees, you see the flat green corn-fields, sprinkled with red flowers in summer, and the meadows full of sleek cows; and over them the spire of the church in the distance, where we used to walk all together of a Sunday. I think I see my good little mother, my old aunt, and the two girls, sitting out at tea there in the garden before the door, as they were the evening I came home last, after being three years away! I have the old place before me now, and how my mother shrieked and dropped her best china tea-pot, which was always used on Sundays, and my aunt ran to open the gate, and how my sisters screamed and ran for my brother Ben, who was on the other side of the wall, in the carpenter's garden, pulling cherries for the carpenter's pretty daughter.

We had a happy enough time of it when we were boys there in the country, however dull it seems to me to be when one grows up. For my part, I'm sure I don't know how I ever learnt to read at all, so fond was I of pretending to help with the field-work, or anything else instead of

going to school. We would slip out with the hay people or the reapers at six in the morning, and work all day in a broiling sun, take our dinner with them in the field, and come home in the evening, as if we had been doing nothing wrong; and my mother never had the heart to scold us for it.

However, our prime spree was when we got leave to go along with the market-carts into Chester on market-day, when the cheeses made on the farm, or some of the orchard fruit, were sent in to be sold. I well remember the delight of my first liberty day on shore in Bombay, after a six months' voyage, with half a dozen rupees in my pocket: everything I saw in the streets like part of a tale in a book; and how we ordered a dinner fit for kings with our first wages, and smoked half a box of cigars under the verandah, while we looked at the strange figures passing below. But after all, one wearied of the thing on a second trial, and it wasn't equal to the feelings with which we boys drove into Chester of a fine summer morning, with good-natured Dick, the farm servant, who let us manage as we chose. The whole day was before us, the streets full of people, and everything that wasn't wonderful was funny. A curious, Dutch-built sort of old town is Chester, as everybody knows. I have often been puzzled since to think what kind of sea-going craft people knocked off in those days; although I fancy the sea left them much less to their own taste than the shore did. Such narrow little crooked streets you have, with the upper part of the houses over the foot-passengers' heads, and every now and then a dark entry into a court, or a crooked stair, or an outside wooden gallery. And there we sat, on the top of one of the carts, crushing through the crowd, and swaying about as the pile of cheeses and baskets shook, or waiting stock-still when we could not get forward. We enjoyed seeing the old women chaffer about the price of eggs, and now and then one of us would chuck an orchard apple slyly into their laps, or catch hold of the tops of their umbrellas, which they had put up to keep them from the sun.

It was one of these times that we first saw our old Uncle Ben, or rather an uncle of my mother's, who had gone to sea when she was a girl and he not much older; and she had only seen him twice or thrice afterwards. We had often heard our aunt and her talk of him; there was a huge shell on the parlour mantelpiece which he had brought from the West Indies. Inside it was as beautiful pink as a rose-leaf, and when you put it to your ear it roared like the sea in a stormy night on a lee-shore. I used to view that shell with great awe, as a sort of magical thing; and I fancied that it always told what kind of weather there was then far out at sea, and

that when there was a ship lost one would hear in it the distant cries of drowning sailors. It was the only nautical affair in the house, except a portrait of Uncle Ben himself, done by a Chinee-man in Macao; a rum customer the fellow had made him, too, for his money. The face yellow, with long pig's eyes, and black hair smoothed and curled on each side like a woman's; although underneath there was a pair of whiskers fit for "Blackbeard" the pirate, and a ferocious grin about the mouth, just such as I suppose the Chinee-man thought he saw there. This noble tar had plainly a quid stowed away in his one cheek, it was such a size; but he looked as if he was putting his tongue in it too, and the rascally chopstick had tried his best skill at a streak of 'bacco-juice, which my uncle, I fancy, had drawn across his own figure-head with the back of his hand. The two of them together, no doubt, agreed about not forgetting the pig-tail, which shied over the shoulder from the back of his head down to the bottom of his shirt, and was tied with a blue ribbon as long as an admiral's pennant. So I thought that I should know my Uncle Ben if I met him anywhere between this and Behring's Straits.

Well, one day we were in Chester with the carts at market; the man Dick had put up the horses at the tavern where we got our bread and beer, and my brother and I were standing under the archway of the yard, listening to a man and a woman with a bundle of ballads, singing opposite each other in the middle of the street. Just then we heard the horn of the mail-coach as it came round a corner into the town, and brought up at the door of the head inn close by. Soon after, one of the ostlers, a crony of Dick's, ran over and said there was an old fellow at the "Stag's Head" asking for his missus.

"He's nothing else but a savidge sailor, Dick," says the ostler; "nobody can make nothing of him. He's got a box with him, though, as big as a corn-chest, and a great bundle of sacks and ropes, all stinking of pitch and tar; so means to make himself at home somewheres. You'd better put in your hanimal again, and get 'em into your cart, off our steps."

Dick grumbled at not having had his dinner first, but he yoked the old mare again, and took the cart round to the "Stag's Head."

"I'll tell you what, Bill," said my brother Benny to me, as we stood looking out with our mouths open, like young ducks before a shower: "for a hundred pounds that's Uncle Ben come back to see mother and aunt and all of us!"

"No! you don't say so, Ben!" said I, starting. "Well, if it is, I'll cut off home this moment, and let them know beforehand."

"No, you shan't, though," says Ben, who was older than I, and every now and then tried to come captain over me, which sometimes was the occasion of a battle, when there was anybody to egg me on. "No, you shan't; we'll surprise 'em."

I, however, was half afraid of facing old Uncle Ben so suddenly, as I had come to think of him as a sort of Wandering Jew, who had been everywhere, and never died. I made a bolt to run off for home, when Ben caught hold of me, and we were pulling each other's hair, and tumbling about the yard, when somebody caught hold of me by the stern of the breeches, and hoisted me right in the air, while Ben was shoved into a heap of straw. A voice as loud as a bull's shouted out beside us—

"Hollo! you precious young rascals, is this the way you welcome your old uncle?"

As soon as I was on my legs, I turned round, and saw a tall, stout, oldish man, a little bent, with a dark, rough, hard-cut face, and long ringlets of grey hair coming down to his whiskers, who stood looking at us both with a comical sort of a grin. He had on a low glazed hat, as bright as japan, with a name in front in gilt letters, an old long blue coat with yellow anchor-buttons, and wide canvas trousers, with gilt buckles on his shoes. When he held out his one hand to me, I noticed there was nothing at the end of the other sleeve but a steel hook, which my brother Ben seemed afraid would catch hold of him, for he wouldn't come nearer.

"Come, my boys," said the old man-o'-war's man, "give us a flipper, now you've made out my rig; you see, I've only *one* myself, so I mean no favour betwixt ye. What's your names?"

"Ben and Bill, sir," answered my brother.

"Blest, then, if niece Sall hasn't made me stand Sammy for a name without axing by your leave! Well, my boy, I answers to the same hail; I'm your Uncle Ben. I s'pose you've heard of me?"

"Often, Uncle Ben," said he. "We've your picture at home, but I shouldn't have known you by it."

"Oh," said Uncle Ben, "but that's twenty years ago! I warn't in nothing like this here rig, neither; but, at the time it was done, the whole mess said it was as like as one cathead is to another, saying that the old chow-chow clapped on too much of his Chineese yellow; which, I don't doubt, he meant in kindness, for an extra dollar or so."

As soon as we had exchanged reckonings a little with our stranger

grand-uncle, and told him about the family, he took us into the tavern, and treated us all to as jolly a blow-out as the house could furnish.

"Now," said Uncle Ben to the ploughman Dick, "get your wheel-consarn under weigh, and let's make sail for this here farm. We'll have our first bowl of grog there, boys; and I'll not smoke my first pipe on shore till your mother fills it for me. Bless you, Bill, I recollect her a little girl in the old house in Watling Street, younger than you are, when I was about the age of Ben there. We were at the same school, and although I was her uncle, little Sally used to help me with my accounts. You two fellows, big enough to stow a mizen-royal, you make her an old woman to what she was when I saw her last."

All the way as we went along, sitting in the cart, out of the town and through the country road in a bright summer's afternoon, it was curious to us to see the old tar's delight with everything. Before this his whole acquaintance with the land had lain in sea-port towns or great cities, except now and then a short cruise on shore in some foreign country. He had been at sea from a mere lad, and had just left a frigate three years on the African station. So you may think how we laughed at having to tell our old uncle the commonest things about the country, and seeing how he appeared to take as much pleasure in the sight of fields, and trees, and gardens as if they were dropped from the moon. I remember, too, that once or twice I wondered to find his remarks made me notice something strange and beautiful in what I had seen every day since I was a child. When we got out of the highway into a rough field-road through the long clover-hay, the old fellow grew anxious to get a sight of the house, although we were so deep in the low fields, that you might have thought there wasn't one within ten miles. Uncle Ben stood up on the top of his old chest, and looked round as bewildered as a greenhorn coming on deck to his first morning watch out of sight of land.

"Well, boys," said he, "blest if this bean't to me summut like the captain's gig in a Bahama swell, always below the horizon: I see nothing but the tops of fences and corn-fields. I don't doubt you've taken the bearings, messmate," to Dick, who was driving; "but I'd like to know how's her head, and whereaway lies this said port."

Honest Dick, however, didn't know what he meant, and the old quartermaster of the *Minerva* asked him to heave-to, and let him down the side.

"Come away, boys," said Uncle Ben to us; "let's start ahead, if it's

only for the curiosity of the thing. I must have a look-out off the royal-yard of that there tree, which wouldn't have made a bad spar for our frigate."

We were quite ready to climb up after him, but the old man was at the top before us, and we soon heard him hailing out from aloft, "Sail ho! my lads!—is that the craft? White paint from bends to gunnel—double tier of ports—and rigged with smoking funnels, as long as in any of your new-fangled 'steamers'!"

We knew it must be our own house he saw from the place; and Uncle Ben gave three cheers at the sight of Old Mallow Farm, with the cows gathered behind the dairy for milking, and the pond at the end of the carpenter's house covered with ducks and geese washing themselves. The fine evening sunshine came all over the two gardens; and the tops of the trees, and the piles of crossed planks in the wood-yard, looked as if they were dipped in real gold. There was a market-cart full of neighbours stopping on the road at the carpenter's gate, to hold a palaver with him and his wife; and their little girl, with our two little sisters, were sitting on the wall, while our mother and aunt looked over it from their own garden.

A little while after we were all sitting in the little parlour at home, with the tea-things on the table, and the window open to let in the sweet summer air of the garden; while the old sailor, as happy as possible between his two nieces on the sofa, with the rest of us about his knees, was busy with them overhauling the slack of all that had happened since they saw each other. What we younger ones wanted was to hear something about the sea, and how Uncle Ben had lost his arm.

"All in good time, boys," said he; "please God, I'll spin you the whole yarn out before we part company; but not this bout. If you were as salt as I am, from full forty years' cruising, you'd be glad for one night to wash your mouths in sweet water, and eat nothing but *soft tack*. A grain of brine just now, or a snift of tar, would be the death of me. Well, you see, Sally dear, and Niece Barbara, I must give you the rights of the matter; how I come to turn up now all standing, after you might ha' thought I'd lost the number of my mess, and gone to the bottom. 'Xcuse my manners, though, nieces, and little Ben, there, fill me a pipe of negro-head out of the chest, so as you doesn't object to the smoke. It's the genuine sort, that would make a man who smoked it tell you his mind in spite of himself, and wouldn't disagree with a sucking child. And harkee, Bill, boy, you'll find a pair of East Ingee shawls and a box of

shells under my sailing gear; hand them out of their berth for your mother and Niece Barbara."

Ben filled one of the long clay pipes we had bought in Chester, and while we—all but my mother, who was thanking Uncle Ben for minding us—were overhauling the curiosities, he lighted it, and had his smoke. The light clouds went out at the parlour window, and hung in the air alongside, till you couldn't see the garden; so I suppose the old man wasn't looking at it, but meditating on what he had been going to say. At last my mother put her head on his shoulder, and said, "Tell us now, then, uncle; I'm listening. Children, do keep the shells and things to yourselves, and let aunt hear what Uncle Benjamin was saying."

"Ay, ay," said he, turning round gravely; and then with a cheerful smile,—“Well, girls, well, I was just overhauling that same; and it's wonderful in how short a time one looks up the whole log it's taken such a many years chalking down! You, Sally, now, by the church-books you're but five years younger than myself, yet you're a perfect girl to me. You've your children there: if they make you old one way, they make you younger another; while here am I—fifty-three I made myself last birthday, by the old Bible in my chest—older than my father was when he died, and he was seventy-one. You've no idea, Niece Barbara, how hard work and weather both wears a man down at sea, one day to windward on tops'l-yard, hauling out an earing with a wet skin, the blast cutting you like a knife; t'other, sweating at an oar, with the water as calm and hot as the glass on a skylight. But most 'specially it's the having nothing to look to, no one to think of, that brings a sailor sooner to grey hairs and weariness. At the voyage end, he must ship again and in anchors, for what use is he of ashore? The sea's made him, and it must e'en take him.

"Well, I liked the service, and was well treated, as a steady hand, and ready for any work. I liked the freedom and the venturesomeness; although I own, Sally dear, if there was one thing that haunted me, it was the thought of you and your Tom sitting at the fire in that same little bright room, as you were when I seed you a year after your marriage. Oftentimes it hove up in a dream, like a sail out of the sea, and seemed to draw nearer, when, behold you, 'All hands' 'd be sung out down the hatchway; or else I'd beat about and about it for a whole watch; an' most of all, when we wor at our noisiest, or doing our worst, the thought would come strongest.

"Hows'ever, I forgot that, when I seed you a widow, and knew you'd

your own troubles. I thought on you often aftertimes, sittin' lone and dreary in the town; so I fancied myself in a better berth where I was, knocked about in an old jackass frigate, chasing schooners that could sail round her, an' now and then overhauling a scuttled prize or landing a cargo of greasy niggers. Even if I was getting crazy-timbered, like the old *Minerva* herself, why, there was the blue seas as fresh as ever to keep us shaking; an' some time or other we'd go quietly down, and be done with it. I'd the conning of her wheel in the starboard watch, and somehow felt a concern in the old craft that made up to me for the want of such with any kith or kin of mortal creatures. In a light wind, or a breeze astern, she yawed like a jackass, as she was, and with a head wind she kicked like one; but under double-reefed tops'ls she carried a small enough wheel, and wore well; so you may just think I had a kindness for the jade, not to speak of shipmates I had weathered it with so long. Well, one hot afternoon watch we were standing off the mouth of Old Calabar river in the tail of a light breeze, the three tops'ls just lifting, and the land well down, with only a thin haze over where it lay. I was leaning against the hammock-nettings, abaft the larboard fore-chains, keeping a lazy eye on the horizon to seaward, which was broken with the heat, so as you could hardly know water from sky. The water alongside was as blue as blue could be, you'd ha' thought it scarce broke under the cutwater at the bows. I don't know how it was, our being so long out, on salt junk and rotten water—or whether some'at was wrong about the upper works—but just then a sort o' megrim come over me at sight of the sea. My head swam with the slow blue wash of it, in the middle of the white haze; I thought of all the poor fellows I'd heard tell of that fancied the waves a green field, and saw their little birth-town in the clouds, and so jumped o'erboard. I'd 'a' given a month's grog for a stiff breeze off-shore, an' a sail on the lee-bow in chase; or to put my mouth to a runnin' stream in the grass, and drink myself under water, as I've seen an old queer stone-faced chap do the whole year round at a town well. It wasn't long after, neither, when the man aloft sings out, 'Sail ho!' and sure enough there was the three masts and hull of a ship to windward, hove high into the air with the heat, and cut through by the haze, so that you could see her portline and her royals plain, long before her larger canvas. It turned out to be the sloop-o'-war that relieved the *Minerva* off the station, and bringing letters for the ship's company. There was one of them for me, Sally, which you'd sent afloat two years afore, from this here farm, when you settled in it; and here it 'ad been

boxing the compass in chase of me. I s'pose by this time you've for gotten what you said in that 'ere letter; but, bless your kind heart, I've got it by memory as well as I know the ship's ropes. You said how you'd seen an old shipmate at Greenwich as told you I was in the *Minerva*, and how you was hearing the wind roar through the trees the last night, but in the morning, when you wrote, it was quite calm, and the fields so green out of the window. Only the sight of the shell above the fireplace made you put it to your ear, and the sound was so loud you a'most thought you heard the sea, till you took the notion of writing to me. You told me, Sall, you mind, what a difference there was 'twixt London an' the country; so quiet it was, that it brought back your young thoughts, and so happy you felt stepping out into the garden of a morning, looking at the cows feeding in the green grass over the hedge; and you gave me a day's log of what you did at the farm, as reg'lar as an Indiaman's in the trades, to 'muse me like, you said, in a watch below. As soon as I overhauled it, the whole mess was waiting to hear the letter, and I'd got to read it out from one end to another twice running. You should ha' seen their faces, Sall, while they listened, every one half over his hammock, to hear. Not a man but praised you to the masthead, Sally dear, and wished he had a wife that could fist such a screed; and an old foretopman said it'd be a mighty good berth to lay up in for life. At the time I said nothing, but I was thinking of every word you'd written as if it was a drop of dew off a green leaf; something about a sort of new life, or a world I'd never heard of before, unless it was long ago when I didn't mind it. I couldn't think anybody else had a notion what them little words about trees, and grass, and growing gardens, and meadows, stood for; and I thought so the more when we came into port, and saw every one spend his earnings like a fool, and get drunk for weeks, and then ship again for a long voyage. When we reefed topsails in the morning watch, I leant over the yard, and felt as sick as a boy; only it was at *thought* of the sea, and all concerned with it. The sea itself got to me all of a sudden like a great, unnat'ral, hatef'l, livin' thing, as all my life long had kept me box-hauling and beating about, out o' sight of some blessed river-mouth that ran right out of the very sky. I couldn't believe I'd ever get quit of it, for I don't think as I ever noticed before what a force was in every heave of the waves, or what a deepness was under 'em; till at last the old frigate was tumbling homeward-bound before a strong sou'-wester.

"When we were paid off at Spithead, an' I'd got my traps ashore at

Plymouth Point, I turns in to snooze out the three watches for once; but three shipmates hauled me out at eight bells of the middle watch, to drink success to the cruise on shore. So the first thing next day I hired a donkey, and went over to the Reach, in sight of Spithead and the sea, just to give the old brine-tub a parting hail. The spring-tide was coming in full, and a seventy-four and a frigate standing out under all sail, an' everything looked so brisk and fresh in the offing, while the beach behind and the town was so dirty like and smoky, that a sort of terror came over me at the idee of being wiled out once more. So I gave a long look at the craft and the sea-line, an', thinks I, it don't signify, old salt-and-blue, here I am out of your law; mother 'arth shall have my bones yet, an' not need a shot to sink them. It's my last sight of blue water; I'll never more hear the ripple alongside in the hammock, nor hand canvas on a yard. I own it seemed melancholy like, as if I remembered every messmate and shipmate I ever sailed with. The tide had almost floated the beast off ground as he stood, and, when we wore round to make the port again, I could ha' fancied the sea was coming after me, hand-over-hand, it broke with such a splash under the creature's counter. There it was, too, looking through the end of every street in the town, like some great eye watching you; an' I didn't feel easy in my mind till the coach I got aboard of dropped it under the hills, and we bearing right away into the green land.

"Hows'ever, girls, I must just ball up this here long yarn I've been spihning, and pay out no more cable, if I'm to ride at anchor with a clear hawse. I'd some thoughts of gettin' a sort of a jury-berth rigged for myself, in some out-o'-way place, and living like one o' them old hermits I've heerd called anchoryites, because they were moored head and stern in a wilderness. But I know how it 'ud be: in a fortnight's time I'd be cutting cable, and off to sea in the first ship, if it were only the one as would soonest go down. After all I thought about the green leaves, an' o' the smell of the earth, I do believe, Sally, lass, I had a longing all the while far more for a kind heart or two, and some pleasant faces to pass the life-lines around, ere letting slip. So here I be, the old hulk you see me, SaH, come athwart you to ask you to let me moor alongside till I break up. Why, bless you, I didn't need that squeeze o' the hand to show you 'll not leave me adrift. I've seen it all along by your looks, both of you. But you can't tell how this here quietness, with the look of the garden outside, and the birds singing in the bushes, comes right into the heart when it's been weary. It's a'most as I could feel

the very harbour-waters of life lipping up between you and me, when all the time before, one's been afloat sailing on the face of trouble and loneliness."

So old Uncle Ben was settled down to live with us; and as he had saved prize-money, and got an out-pension for his lost arm, he was comfortably enough off, and would have his share in the keeping up of the house. For a good while, I remember, he took up every little job about the place that was least like what he had been used to afloat, as if he wanted to forget all connected with the sea; and it was queer enough to see him early of a morning in the garden, hoeing cabbages or digging ground, in an old blue jacket and well-scrubbed canvas trousers, and a large straw hat.

After breakfast and dinner you would see him smoking a long pipe under the large plane-tree at the end of the house, with an eye on the chimney-can aloft, to notice the wind. Then he had what he called his quarter-deck walk with my mother or Aunt Barbara before the door, and at every turn he would wait till his companion was ready to go back again. Every night, when we were going to bed, we would hear him pacing backwards and forwards outside, six steps and round again, in a walk behind the kitchen, where he could get a free prospect, and see what sort of weather it was to be. If there was much wind or a bright moonlight night, after awhile old Ben was sure to keep one hour of the middle watch, walking there; and many's the long talk I've had with him, when I was a boy, in these watches. I would slip out of bed quietly, and downstairs with one of his old pilot-coats on, to hear a story from him; and there we'd walk, he with his pipe, and I listening to a yarn about the war, the slave trade, a cutting-out, or a chase, while the wind roared in the trees, and the planks in the carpenter's wood-yard rattled and creaked again. There he was in his element, and I caught a sort of strange wild notion of what he was speaking about, and something of a spirit of the sea, which seemed to be what I had longed for years before. But this was all on the sly from my mother, poor dear woman; and for Uncle Ben's part, I believe the good old man fancied he was warning me against the sea, which he was aware my mother hated. I never knew a man who loved the sea from the bottom of his heart, with all its hardships and stirring perils, as he did; the whole story about his being wearied and longing for the land was, I fancy, a sudden whim he took into his head after a three years' cruise. In a few months he got restless, knocked off his little jobs, and, between his long spells at the



pipe, the only thing which seemed to give him any satisfaction was telling stories about the sea to every one whom he could get hold of, doing anything which could remind him of it, or reading books of old voyages. He and I built a whole fleet of ships of every rig, from a frigate to a cutter, over at the carpenter's, which we floated on the pond when we had cleared it of ducks ; and in six months' time I knew every rope, sail, and evolution, almost as well as I do now, and could box the compass like a pilot's boy.

Some rough November night, when we were all sitting round the fire, with the shutters shut, and could hear the storm getting up by degrees in the distance, till it burst along the garden-lane against our windows, and then howled away into the trees, I've heard my mother say, with a shiver, looking at the old man, "God be with those at sea to-night, uncle ! what a blessing to have a roof to cover us !" One time, Uncle Ben had been listening for more than an hour to the sound, almost without speaking, only sitting up to light his pipe again ; his face had kindled at the moment, and he seemed just as if he was going to start on his feet ; but at my mother's words his features fell, he looked grave and half ashamed, shook his head, and said, "Ay, ay, Sally, no doubt, no doubt ;" after which he began puffing away tremendously at his pipe.

"Uncle Ben," said I, pulling him by the coat, "what'd they be doing now ? When would they take in the topsails ?"

"Why, bless you, boy," said he, gruffly, "you needn't 'ave asked that. I know as well as if I seed it this moment : there's a thousand craft now under their three double-reefed-tops'ls, and fore and main-stays'ls, safer on the open sea than we are sitting here ; ay, and drier too, for the watch to the lee of the long-boat. A mere stiffish sou'-wester, Bill, lad. But Sall, dear, didn't I ax you to let me clap on a couple of backstays to that 'ere long chimley amidships, before the rough weather ? I shouldn't wonder if we have it a gale from the nor'-east before long, an' then you're as sure of carrying it away as if you set the *Minerva's* new mizen-tops'! upon it."

This notion of the old sailor's, who would fain have made the farmhouse look as like a ship as possible on any pretext, might have been as well carried out ; for, a year or two after, the tall chimney did fall, and went down through the slates to the kitchen floor, though happily nobody was hurt. However, at present it only took him into the wake of an old yarn about a captain who went mad, and would set the more sail the harder it blew, until the three to'gallant-masts went all at once, and the

captain wounded two of the lieutenants with his pistols, before he could be secured, and the canvas taken in. Then he told us a strange tale of a passenger on board of an Indiaman he was in, who had been hidden at Gravesend by the captain for a great bribe, when he was escaping from England; the bad weather they had, till in an awful storm his conscience made him so terrified, that he let out such things, that the men said he was a Jonah, and four of them took him out of his berth at night, and hove him overboard secretly; but none of the four ever saw land again. Old Ben, however, contrived to throw into all these stories such a spice of life and reality, as showed he secretly delighted in the remembrance. You would have thought you heard the wind roar, and the waves washing up, and saw the very ropes and canvas. It was evident he and I looked at the whole thing from another side than the rest who listened, like a rough sea at sunrise, all bright one way, all dark another; and for my part, I understood most of the niceties of the matter, on account of our frequent conversations together, and our building so many models.

My mother drew in her breath with a long sigh, looking round at us all; and "Dear, dear!" said Aunt Barbara, "to think that men can be so foolish as to trust themselves on the wild ocean! And what's it all for, I wonder, that they can't be well at home?"

"Why, niece, you don't think, I s'pose, when you take your tea and sugar night and morning, and put on your gown, how all them matters, and many more, has cost men thousands of miles of salt-water ploughing, and lying out over and over again on the slant yards while you're asleep, and the wheel never wanting a hand. Where'd you be if some fellows didn't take a fancy to the sea?"

"Ah, that's true, Uncle Benjamin," said the old lady; "so it is! 'Tis all for the best, I daresay, except, the world were of one piece."

"Blest if I think that would be a change for the better," said Uncle Ben, with his eyes sparkling up; "the world'd rot in no time, it would; or else you'd have a desert instead, no man could pass over. You can't make the old blue sea common, thank God! nor wearisome, nor lay it down with them railways as I hear is being started all over this country. It'll last them out, for a fair track to hearts-of-oak that can't abide the dry doings of your hard-an'-fast folk ashore. To tell the truth, I'm ashamed, myself, of lying like an old log here, while I think I see the *Minerva* driving the white dust across her fore foot, and shaking out her tops'ls again in a night like this!"

"Uncle, Uncle Ben!" exclaimed my mother, seriously; "I know it's only a spark of your old feelings, but you don't think how you may excite little Bill there's mind, young as he is. I noticed the foolish boy look so just now, and I'm afraid he's got too fond of sailing ships lately."

The old man looked as guilty as I did, and after a little he said,—
"Bill, d'ye hear your mother, boy? it's a dog's life, lad, it's a dog's life, so it is; and don't you go for to think of it because I'm open and above-board with ye. And the worst of it is, that the sea's a sort o' taste a man never gets out of his mouth: you may break him of drinking or cards, but *that's* a thought he'll no more get quit of till he dies, than that there shell can lose the sound of it without being broken to shivers. Why, when I lie awake of a night here, my mind seems too wide for me; as if every thousand miles I've gone over, and every broad look-out from the masthead, rough or calm, black or bright, had grown into me; and every little paltry thing I've done in the daytime, and every separate stone or tree, looks swallowed up like in my thoughts. But don't think, Sall, dear, that I'm discontented living with ye. No, I've seen and felt here, at your hearth-stone, something I know well is better far than aught from here to the Pacific; only it can't be made my own altogether. I look on, and I don't feel as if I'd begun at the beginning with you, all fair and ship-shape; somehow I think now an' then of what might ha' been. The anchor's down and holds, Sall, but with too much scope of cable to feel it, 'cept when that same restlessness begins to heave me off. We'll bring her up to the ground by little and little."

Well, for a while after this again, Old Ben did seem to make up his mind to a life on shore, out of sight of blue water. He would even wander out into the fields, when the spring came round, with the two little girls, and take pleasure for hours in watching them build child's houses, and seeing how the green things had grown since the day before. He enjoyed his pipe as much as ever, but I don't think he spoke so often about the sea, or told so many yarns, so that sometimes you would have thought he had forgotten it. Once, indeed, there came two fellows dressed like regular tars to the door begging, with a pass which said they had been shipwrecked. Uncle Ben was overjoyed at the thought of talking to men who had been at sea; he had them in, and treated them to some grog and pipes. They didn't seem to like the knowing cut of the old man's jib, though; when he asked the ships they had been in, and the ports they sailed to, and they named one, he was down upon

them: not a ship but he knew something about her, and could cross-haul them somewhere or other. He smoked their cant sea-phrases after a little, though it was plain how slow the real sailor was to believe a rogue could be found passing himself off for true-blue. However, when he did discover it, you would have laughed at the quick time the two Liverpool dock-lubbers took to get out of the house and away from the old man's indignation. Latterly, too, our next neighbour the carpenter got to be a crony of his; they would sit together in the carpenter's porch talking for two or three hours on end of an evening; and it was good to see the carpenter's respectful, simple way of listening to his companion, as he explained how to get up jury-masts, or gave examples of the merits of different kinds of timber for a weatherly spar.

But the second winter after Old Ben came to us he didn't stand well: he appeared to fail a good deal, and the east wind always gave him a sharp cough. He was more than ever with my mother, of whom he was exceedingly fond, as well as of my sisters; and of a Sunday evening he would ask one of them to read out of the Bible some of the chapters where the sea is mentioned. Sometimes it was about Noah in the ark, or Jonah in the ship of Tarshish, or the Psalm about "them who go down to the sea in ships." Then there was Jesus Christ and His disciples in the boat, and the storm that turned into a calm at His bidding; and the apostle Paul, who was cast away on an island; and I've sometimes been struck since at remembering what a whole Bible in itself there was in these choice pieces of his, which the old man came to know so well that he would set the little girl right if she made a mistake in her reading aloud. He took an odd pleasure also in hearing the service for the dead at sea, if it was done deep and solemn: many was the real scenes, he said, it brought up to him when he had heard it. There was one part in the Revelation, I recollect, though, which he had never fallen upon, till once my mother picked it out, and bade little Mary read it. It was in the summer-time, such a clear still night that we could hear the church clock outside of the village striking nine, through a lane in the wood between, while we listened to the chapter; and the quietness of the whole country round seemed to slip in afterwards at the open window. The words were these: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it;" and a verse or two on, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

"Eh, Mary?" said Uncle Ben, waiting to see if it was the end of a

verse, "what's that? Are you sure it's down in the book? Take a turn there, my dear, and read it again,—slower."

Little Mary went over the same words again, but Uncle Ben would look himself, to be sure it was in the Bible.

"Well," said he, "it's logged down there in black and white, with a royal arms outside of the whole, to show there's nothing smuggled aboard; so it must be true. Only I'd not ha' believed it on the chaplain's oath, and I don't think there was one man or officer in the *Minerva* that wouldn't have laughed at the notion of an 'arth and sky without a sea! Belay there, Mary, will you, for to-night? and let's think over it, for it's a matter I don't all at once see the bearings of."

The pipe Old Ben smoked that night was a long one, and more silent than common; and I've no doubt he was turning over the question seriously, and pondering how to settle it, till he turned in.

It was not long after this that he confided to me, little by little, what had been gradually coming more and more into his mind for months, although he was ashamed to tell it straightforward to my mother and aunt.

"Bill, my boy," said he at last, "it's no use keeping off an' on no longer about what I've got at heart. I'm getting old, I think, fast, and I'm afraid it won't do just to ship again for a three months' voyage or so, out o' sight of land. I've got too soft already to heave up anchor, and p'raps I'd find myself too soon thinking of the green grass and your mother's hearth-side, for a bare look-out to windward. It's a fancy, Bill, boy, it's a fancy, but one that won't bear th'arting no longer. I tell you what: I must see the old blue ocean once more, and smell the sea-breeze. It's all very well talking about the comforts o' land, and such like; but I couldn't die happy without a sight of that same uncomfortable, dreary, homeless world, as they calls it, that I passed my life on. An' so it is, a world in itself, Bill, nothing like aught here. And harkee, Bill, I've a notion *you'd* like to have a squint at it for once too; but mind, it's for good and all: you must take a long pull and be done, when you're at it, an' then come home and mind your schooling; for I know your mother's set her heart against the thought of your going to sea, and I can't say I'd like you to go myself, takin' all things together. So I'll tell you how it's to be done, Bill, boy. I've got it into my head, and no make-believe either, as how a spell of what they call sea-bathing'd do me good for them aches I had in the winter. Just you keep a stopper on your jaw, now, and you'll see you and I'll have our first and last look of the broad ocean ere a fortnight's gone."

The old man managed it just as he had said, and in a short time he and I went off together by ourselves to stay a week or two at a little fishing village on the westmost point of Cheshire coast; for Uncle Ben took care not to come in sight of it anywhere short of a full prospect of the main ocean. It was dark when we got there, so that we saw nothing but some lights on the pier where the boats were coming in with fish, and we heard the heavy wash of the tide among the stakes and shingle, with a long glimmer of dull light in the sky of the cloudy autumn night, above the black distance. Although we lived not very far off from salt water, it was the first time in my life I was to see it, so I was quite excited at the thought, and all the old sailor's yarns and nautical ideas thronged on my mind, as if I was going to realize them; but notwithstanding, I slept sound with weariness. Old Ben came to my little bed next morning and woke me, and I saw by his fresh cheerful look that he had been out for some time already. I dressed myself in a minute, and ran out; but at the first step the whole scene rushed upon me like a vision. I fairly started at the sight of such a breadth of water, going so far out into the clear sky; and at the dark keen colour of the whole, with the deep green waves which rolled in and out, breaking white about the pier, and the breezy blue far off. My eyes blinked for a moment, and then I looked again for a long while without speaking, until I burst out at last, "Oh, Uncle Ben!"

"Glorious enough, isn't it, boy?" said he; and the old man stood by me with tears in his eyes, I think; and neither of us said anything more that first time. But we went down low upon the long white sands, till the ebb-tide sprayed at our feet, and I supposed it was coming in. A large fishing-boat, with its red sail, which was running in for the pier, seemed to be level with our heads, as if the water stood above the land, and two large craft near the horizon, leaning over with the wind in the midst of a blue haze to the south-west, were seen to melt into it together in their white canvas.

All the dreams and wishes I had ever had of future life, and wild free wandering, when I was sitting over my slate in school, or tired of a day's idleness at home, they came back upon me while we were staying here. Two or three times I said to Uncle Ben, "I'll be a sailor, let my mother or anybody say what they will;" and though I can't deny the difference of the reality from these green fancies, I haven't repented choosing the sea yet. It suits my temper, and, taking one thing with another, I like the life and the change, and prefer it a thousand times to any shore-

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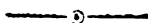
going business I know of. As for the old man, it's too long to tell you how happy he was that fortnight,—dipping in the surge of the tide like a child in a bath, spinning long yarns with the old fishermen at night, and taking me a short cruise now and then in a spare coble. At the end he got dull again; but I remember what he said the last night, as he stood looking out to the horizon, the tide making fast at our feet :—

“ Bill,” said he, heaving a long sigh, “ I think I've gone far to fathom that 'ere verse in the Bible about there being no more sea. I recollect, when I was on it, I used sometimes to think of a happy after-life—when we die, you know—as somehow like the best o' things ashore: a pleasant land, with rivers and fields, trees and fruit, and no more hard work, nor keeping watch, nor rough weather. But I'm glad to have been took away from it, and to have tried the good of these matters, an' to think pleasantly of the sea again. An' glad I am to have had one more look at it, just this fashion, if it was for nothing else but this, that now I think far more solemn like, an' deeper, of the life to come than I did. I've a notion it ought to look to all of us while we're in this life some'at like the sea ; a thing we don't, none of us, after all, understand the nature of ; only that it's full of God's power to work the bitter blood out of us, and there's many a wonder and many a beautiful sight there they don't dream of ashore. The dead don't seem to me to rot there, nor to be in this world at all, but to have gone right into the hand of the Almighty: But I don't say, Bill, my boy, as that there future life mayn't be on the other side of it altogether different ; just as if in the other world there wasn't no more storms, nor hard schooling, nor separation, nor ignorance of what's to be. And so, perhaps, after all, what's said about it in the Bible may be what's called a figger ! ”

Next day we left the place for home ; and I think the old man was satisfied, and took kindlier again to his quiet ways. Everything about the place, and everybody in the house, appeared to be viewed fondly by him, as if he connected them with the notion of home. He talked often of the sea still, sometimes by way of a yarn, but oftener in a quiet serious mood, like a region full of things he revered, and solemn events that had happened to him ; till I daresay it became little more than a strange thought in his mind, which always returned most when he meditated on his end. Indeed, it was only about two years after this that old Uncle Ben got suddenly much weaker, and failed in his memory almost altogether ; and shortly after he died, holding my mother by the hand, as if he remembered no one but her. It left a blank in the house at Mallow

Farm which was not easily filled up. They kept up the hammock he had slung in his little bed-room for months, and I had it rigged again when I came home, and slept in it. At the village, too, they still remember Old Ben, how he used to step up the churchyard to service in his best canvas, as white as snow, and his blue coat with the anchor-buttons ; and how he smoothed down his hair solemnly with his single hand at the church-door behind my mother. The landlord of the tavern changed his signboard from a waggoner with a mug of beer, to the "Old Tar" smoking his pipe on the sea-shore in a tremendous gale, with a wreck in the offing ; for Uncle Ben had often invited him over on the Saturday night, he having been a soldier and served abroad. You may see the old man's mark to this day in a tall old beech-tree, with its branches on one side cut into steps, which he used to call his foremast, as he went aloft on it regularly every sunset to have a look-out from the masthead. It stands at the end of his little walk behind the house ; and many a time I've paced it myself to and fro, with my feet in the very marks of his footsteps, and thinking of his thoughts, as well as of all that's happened to myself since the nights he and I took our fox'sle turns there.

You may be surprised at my pretending to give you the old man's words so closely ; but the fact is, the substance of them sank deeply into my mind at the time. Besides, I knew his way so well, and loved him so well, that I could not help telling his story very much after his own fashion.



ALONE IN THE BUSH.

IN the whole of Australia you could scarcely have found a more drearily lonely spot than that in which "Old Coggeshall" had pitched his hut. The hovel of grey slab, roofed with grey and brown bark, and bulged out at one end with a fireplace and chimney of badly made and clumsily laid brick, stood on a sandy spit of land, scantily covered with scrub and stunted trees, which had in front a long sandy beach, on which the Pacific ever rolled and roared ; which had behind a lagoon almost hemmed in with swamps, and on the landward side of its point the mud-flats and mangroves that divided the lagoon from a small shallow inlet of the sea.

Old Coggeshall was a "free selector," and such settlers have been accused of "picking out the eyes" of the land in places where good, well-stocked runs march, for the purpose of increasing their flocks and herds by more expeditious processes than that of breeding.

Old Coggeshall's selection, however, could not boast of any eligibility, either arable or pastoral, and he had no rich neighbours to whose stock he could help himself—no human neighbours, indeed, of any kind, within thirty or forty miles. He kept a few head of cattle and a little mob of horses; and to sell these, and the opossum-rugs he made, the kangaroo-skins he dried, the kangaroo hams he cured, and to buy his flour, tea, tobacco, sugar, rum, raisins, and so on, and now and then a little slop clothing, it was necessary for him to foregather occasionally with his fellow-men; but for the greater part of the year, Old Coggeshall kept himself to himself. He had a slovenly bit of garden-ground, which grew pumpkins, melons, ninety-days' corn, and three or four standard peach-trees; he generally had a cow in milk; and so, in a rough-and-ready way, he could live comfortably enough. His only companions were his dogs and his little granddaughter Bessie, a strangely fair-skinned, flaxen-haired, blue-eyed little blossom to belong to such a dark, rugged old fellow as he.

Bessie was the only human being in the whole wide world who was fond of Old Coggeshall, to whom it mattered a pin whether he lived or died; and in his grim, gruff way, he was fond of her; but he often left her alone for hours together, whilst he pottered about with his gun and his dogs.

Bessie did not mind this in fine weather, and while it was daylight. A dog or two generally stayed at home, or if the whole mongrel pack had followed their master, there was often a pet, there might be several, to feed and to play with,—pets which Old Coggeshall kept, not to amuse his granddaughter, but to sell the next time he went into the nearest township for trading purposes: an orphaned "joey," perhaps, or a wallaby; a couple of ring-tailed opossums snuggling or fuffing in their tea-chest; a black or white cockatoo left to run about loose with clipped wings, and availing itself of its liberty to chase its little mistress, pecking at her heels; a pair of green and red king parrots, or beautifully striped and mottled budgereeghas; a crimson-capped rosella, a Blue-Mountainer in his coat of many colours, or perchance a bald-headed young Native Companion that would insist on stalking after Bessie everywhere like a keeper.

Or she would go out into the paddock and talk to the sweet-breathed cow, which seemed to like to have her ears pulled, and sometimes

answered Bessie's remarks with a low motherly *moo*, as if she approved of them, and pitied the loneliness of the child; while the glossy black crows and glossier black and white magpies hopped and strutted about the glittering logs outside, or perched upon the paddock rails, mellowly croaking and fluting their gossip, as if for her entertainment.

Then she would stray into the garden, and seat herself under the snowy cloud-like spreads of spicily fragrant peach-blossom, or pick the biggest, bloomiest fruit within her reach (Bessie was too dainty to eat wind-fall peaches), and let the slip-stone melt in her mouth as an English little country girl might munch an apple.

She watched the bees that had come in from the bush buzzing over what blossoms they could find, and wondered how the pumpkin-blossoms, big though they were, could turn into the huge gourds, green, golden, streaked, and speckled, that lay lazily about, as if they had had too much to eat—some of them basking on the hut roof. She watched the martins carrying parrot-feathers to line the nests they had made beneath the overlapping sheets of bark, the fearless rosellas pecking on the ground right up to the garden fence, and the little twittering diamond-sparrows fussing about inside.

Then she would go to the beach, and when she was tired of picking up gritty bits of sponge, and trying to pick up jelly-fish fast shrivelling into sandy film, she would sit down on some salt-sodden tree-trunk that had been washed ashore, and look out over the dark blue billows rolling in for ever beneath the bright blue sky. If she saw a smudge of smoke upon it, or a white sail gliding past like a ghost, she puzzled her little head as to what a big ship was like, close by; and greatly wondered what that mysterious "home," of which her grandfather sometimes spoke, was like, from which the big ships came. They seemed so small to Bessie, that she could almost as easily have believed that her grandfather had crossed the sea astride upon a butterfly, as that he could have been brought to Australia, with two or three score more people, in one of these.

When she was tired of her sea-gazing, she would walk to the end of the spit, and watch the sea-birds feeding on the flats, or circling and flapping, screaming and croaking, above them. There were plenty to be seen: gulls and gannets, and grebes, terns, and oyster-catchers, petrels, penguins, and pelicans, somnolently resting from their labours on the slushy shore, where the melancholy mangroves drooped their miry tresses into the mud, and round long-legged little crabs scampered over it like plums or musket-balls on stilts. But sea-birds proper, however numerous

and noisy, are not *company* for one who lives on land. They bring in-shore with them to the land on which they have congregated, however lonely it was before, the added loneliness of the "wide, wandering main."

Bessie soon tired of the flats, and, following some narrow winding track which the cattle had trodden hard between the great rusty rushes and the slim tea-tree poles, found her way down to the edge of the lagoon, to watch the water-fowl there: rosy-cered black swans, musically chatting in their low and gentle voice, black, brown, red, and purple ducks, silver-grey and chestnut ducks, and emerald-necked teal, asleep in the sunshine, flinging up their webbed feet as if turning on a skewer run through their bodies, quietly cruising around, or noisily chasing one another in and out of the reeds and rushes.

Then, by another cattle-track, the little maid would wander out of the tea-tree scrub, startling the black and white wild geese perched upon the poles, and, perchance, a yellow crane or two taking their siesta, and ramble off into the drier bush.

For miles around, except her grandfather (and whereabouts he was, she often did not know) there was not another human being; but fear did not often trouble Bessie in her lonely rambles. She was afraid of the bull, but she could keep away from places in which he was likely to be found. From the nursery stories which Old Coggeshall had told her—almost the only "education" he had given her—she had come to associate the dingo with the wolf that met Little Red Riding-Hood on her way to her grandmother's, but it was very rarely that Mr. Warrigal, letting "I dare not wait upon I would," gave her a nasty look before he slunk off from the sleeping-place in which she had disturbed him, with his brush between his legs. The long black snakes she came upon, curled up or stretched out stiff as sticks, scared her; but she soon learnt that they would not hurt her if she did not hurt them. The jewel-eyed little lizards that basked upon the jagged charred tree-stumps, she would have liked to make friends of; but they vanished, as if by magic, when she drew near.

Except when the locust were clattering on every tree, the bush was generally very still—so still at times that the motionless, ragged-barked, and bare-boled trees had a ghost-like look in broad noon, and Bessie, as a relief to her ear after the bewitched silence, was glad to hear the croak of a green or yellow frog, and when a flock of parroquets or lowries, green, scarlet, purple, golden, flashed athwart the sunshine, screaming out

their joy, the "coach-whip" gave its crack, a mocking-bird began to cough as if clearing its voice for a song, or a mob of mina-birds to chatter. At times, however, Bessie had pleasanter sounds than these to listen to: the green thrush's sweet, brief beginning of a song, the whistle of the summer-bird, the tinkle of a bell-bird, the dainty little warble of the wrens. On the lonely little girl would wander, hoping that the wedge-tailed eagle, hovering high overhead, would not pounce on any of her pretty birds. She stopped to watch the bronze-wing and the wonga-wonga feeding on wild cherries and wild figs, the honey-birds fighting, the wild bees buzzing about the honeysuckle-trees. She chased the few butterflies, white, yellow, and red and gold-bedropt black velvet, without meaning to harm them if she did catch them. Her most mischievous trick was when she grew tired of seeing the ants trudge to and fro, along the straight narrow road they had made in the hard soil and the rough bark between their big mound and the nearest tree; and this was not a very mischievous one. She would take a stick, and bore a hole in their hill, to see the angry ants boil out. She gathered a posy of the few wild flowers she found, and clapped her hands with delight when she came upon a grand crimson waratah. She stood beneath the gum-trees to let them rain down their manna on her head, and picked it up to eat with the bit of damper she carried with her for dinner.

This she generally took on the bank of the creek which ended in the mud-flats.

As she sat munching beneath the sombre shea-oaks whose fibrous foliage sighed and shivered in the faintest breeze—melancholy mourners whom unclouded noontide could not cheer—she watched the blue-coated yellow-vested kingfisher zigzag from side to side, the shy water-moles come up, to disappear still more suddenly if she stirred; and now and then a little fish leap from the water, to become silver-gilt in the sunshine.

Altogether, in fine weather, lonely little Bessie managed to make herself very happy in the bush in her quiet little way; but she always took care to get home before sundown.

When the cockatoos had flown to roost, making their dusky trysting-tree burst forth in big white blossom, when the laughing-jackass had given his last laugh for the day, and the big-headed loud-voiced morepoke was on the wing; when the little spotted native cats had begun to prowl, moths as big as bats were flitting about, and uncanny flying foxes were dropping down upon the peach-trees,—Bessie, however fine the weather, felt dreary if her grandfather was away.

In wet weather, when he was not at home in the evening, and she sat by the fire, after listening all day to the bullet-like rattle of the rain upon the streaming bark roof, and the thunder of the billows on the shore, with no other pet, perhaps, to play with than a praying mantis she had found in the firewood, Bessie felt *very, very* dreary, and shuddered like the shea-oaks when she heard the swamp magpie whistle and the curlew wail. When the frogs burst forth in croak, their chorus seemed company in comparison.

At all seasons of the year, it was dismal to have to go to bed, as she had to do sometimes, with no one else in the house, and to wake up and listen, still alone, to the hideous howl of the wild dogs.

She had not even the sense of protection she might have had if she had been taught to say her prayers. It may be doubted whether Old Coggeshall could have taught her even had he wished, for he was almost as great a heathen as any black fellow. One day when he was absent, black fellows visited his hut—two or three men, with their gaunt dogs, and blanket-clad gins carrying their piccaninnies on their backs.

Perhaps they would not have hurt Bessie—at any rate, she did not give them the chance. As soon as she saw them drawing nigh, she fled and hid herself in the tea-scrub, only venturing out at night to snuggle up, for company's sake, to the old cow's side in the paddock. There she slept all night beneath the stars, and there her grandfather found her in the morning, still sound asleep.

He found, also, the blacks lying about his premises, "like black pumpkins," as Bessie phrased it.

As there had not been even a dog to bark at them, they had helped themselves, *ad libitum*, to his rum, his flour, beef, and other eatables, and when they had gorged and besotted themselves, they had lain down, *more suo*, to sleep off the effects of their debauch.

Poor little Bessie! Only a few rough bushmen, who occasionally looked in upon her grandfather, besides him, knew anything about her, and since they were bachelors, and the child, according to their notions, seemed comfortable enough, her solitariness did not come home to them, and she was left to live on her lonely life.

One day three such rough but kindly fellows rode up to Old Coggeshall's. When they went into the hut they found poor, terrified, half-famished little Bessie nestling up to her grandfather's corpse. The dogs had left her to look after themselves. Her pale face was tear-smudged, but the fountain of her tears was dry. The old man had been dead two

days. The bushmen buried him in the sandy spit, and there he still lies, with the sedge to sigh and the sea to moan his requiem.

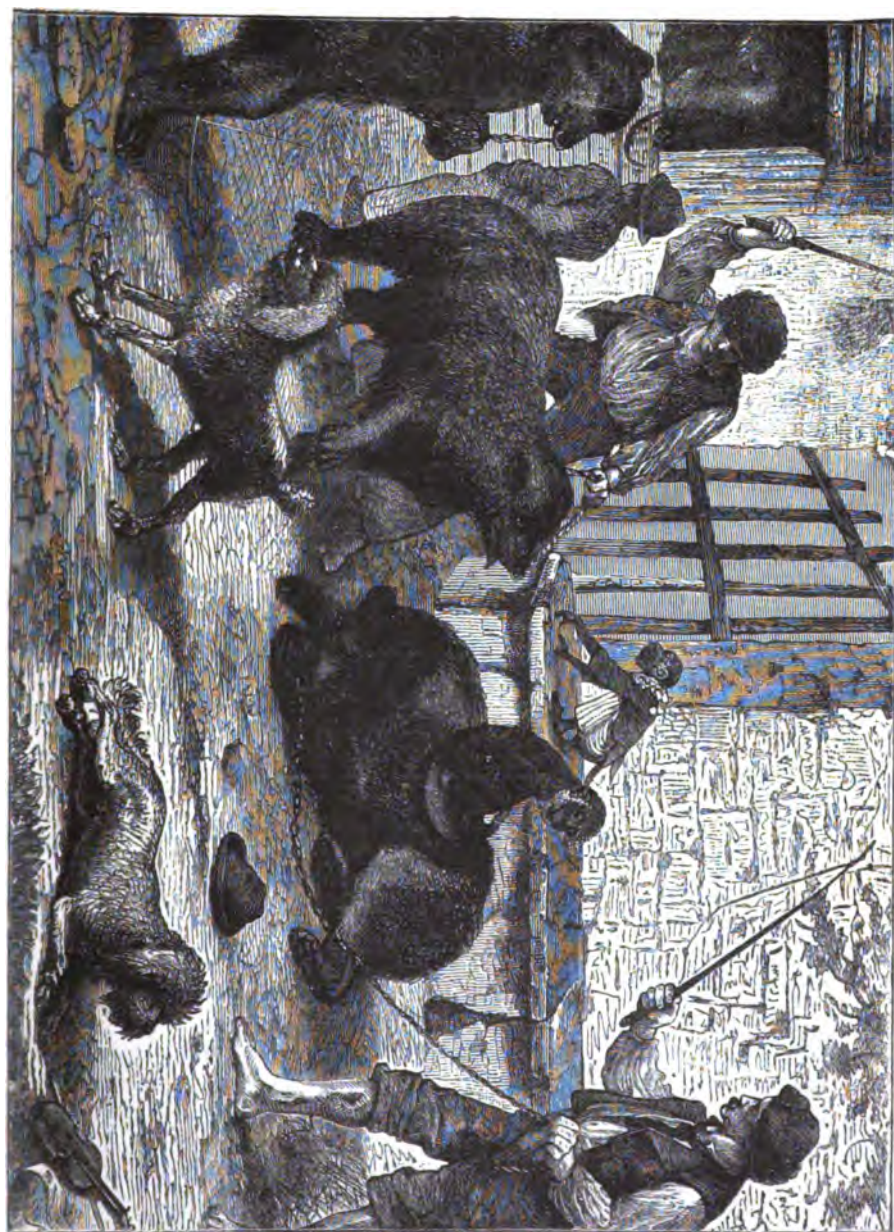
Bessie now, with a rollicking brood of her own children about her, tells them what she remembers of her lonely life, almost as if it had been all a dream.



A BEAR SCHOOL.

BY this phrase is not meant a school, where the master, entering unexpectedly to the scholars, stops his ears, crying, "Hush this noise! Do you take this for a bear-garden?" There are a few such schools yet left, we believe. That still surviving proverbial saying of the bear-garden itself tells a tale. There is a spot at Westminster which until lately was known as the "Bear Garden," and many a crowded hubbub must have set the air roaring there, for the Court used to attend the bear-baiting. It was one of the Royal amusements!

But a glance at our engraving will tell that it is a real school for bears we have to speak of. Two live specimens of the brown bear are the pupils, and that they have a stern master the uplifted whip shows. The fortune of the species has certainly mended a little since they used to be chained to a stake, and have to face one worrying dog after another. But such of them as man, for his own ends, takes into his keeping, have rather a hard first time of it. A few lucky ones kept in zoological gardens, and such-like places, have only to climb a pole set up in their nice clean pits, and go through two or three rough antics, and they get fed in plenty with buns and other dainties. It is not of these aristocrats we are thinking, but of the plebeian bears still occasionally to be met with, led about by a rope, or chain, in the streets. Anybody laughing at the awkward upright creature, turning round and round in his uncouth dance, may easily see that the bear does not laugh. He goes through it very solemnly, and he has good reasons for it; the acquiring of those few unwieldy movements was not for him at all a mirthful matter. Most of the men who bring bears to this country are Swiss, and the education



of the animals they lead about was nearly finished before they arrived here. Indeed, our police would not allow the early lessons to go on, for the bears are noisy pupils.

"Why do you use the whip so much?" we asked a Swiss at home, who was unmercifully thrashing a fine large bear in his training-yard. "It is likely they will be slow in learning."

"Then, this one makes amends by being quick at eating," angrily replied the man. "His dinner, which he was not to have till he had done the tricks, was by accident put within the length of his chain, and having eaten it up to the last morsel, while no one was looking, he now will do nothing. He is," the master added, "as crafty as ten human beings." Again the whip descended.

Bruin roared in a gentle way, but, owing perhaps to being made comfortable by a full stomach, he really did not seem to care very much for the blows falling on his shaggy hide.

In another part of the yard was a younger, smaller bear, chained to a post. Like the other, it had a ring in its nose, and it was standing upright, with its unwieldy fore paws dangling in the air. It was kept in this position by the snappings of a poodle dog, always in motion in front of the bear, never for a moment ceasing its yelping. The man, having tired himself by the use of the whip, spoke afresh:—

"I see you are looking at the dog; without dogs we never should train a bear at all. Good Victorine, keep him up," he encouragingly said. The dog had stopped for a second in its barking; it began again furiously.

I could not help feeling a little bit angered at that dog. It was so conceited, so full of vanity at having this authority given it to tyrannize over another creature. This is the one bad quality I see in dogs: they are always ready to join human beings in terrifying, hurting, or mastering other animals. A single pat from the young bear's paw would have sent Victorine sprawling; but, backed up by her master, she swaggered before the bear as if she herself owned it. The quality is very useful to man, but I doubt it is not very creditable to the dogs. I could see from the glare of Bruin's eye, as he kept it on his tormentor, that some instinct had made him aware of the ancient feud between his tribe and the dog species. But he saw the hated whip rising and falling not very far away on a back like his own. He had to keep up on his hind legs.

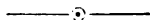
It must all have been a very ordinary occurrence, for there was a lad present in the yard, as well as the man, and this lad, with hands

thrust deep in his pocket, had turned his back on the bear-whipping, and was talking to a large monkey which sat crouching in the window aperture of a kind of stable. Now, boys have a keen interest in watching a thrashing going on, when it is not their own shoulders that are getting it. I am afraid the poor bears must have been in the habit of having a good deal of it, to make it so dull a proceeding to that youth. He did not face about towards the yard until he heard the man—his father, I supposed—address me the second time, speaking of the dog.

Suddenly there was a shriek from that part of the yard. Looking, I saw the lad on his back on the ground, showing heels and hands in the air together. "Jocko has got my cap!" he shouted, struggling up into the sitting posture. "He jumped on my head." It seemed that the very instant the lad had turned his back to the monkey the mischievous creature had pounced down upon him, upsetting him by the shock, and was off with his hat in a twinkling. Master Jocko could now be heard chuckling somewhere inside the stable at his own success, no doubt with the cap set awry on his queer head. The man, followed by the lad, rushed into the building to recover it. There was a tremendous to-do inside, but in the end the excited monkey appeared outside on the very highest part of the roof. He was jabbering away, but was not looking very triumphant. The man and his son came out of the stable doorway at the same moment, the boy putting the cap very firmly on his head.

"If you want a quiet life, master," the man said, wiping the sweat from his face, "I would advise you not to begin the training of bears and monkeys."

I assured him that I was not thinking of entering on that line. But I have never since seen a bear led about in the streets without feeling more kindly towards it, for what I saw in the Swiss training-yard.



THE LAST MAN IN THE BATTERY.

AN INCIDENT IN THE CRIMEAN WAR.

"SO you want me to tell you about a battle, do you?" said Captain H—, of the Royal Navy, as he leaned back in his easy chair after dinner, and looked round upon the circle of eager faces. "Well,

that's what you all want that haven't seen one; but if you'd once had a fair taste of a real fight, with all the blood, and wounds, and dismal sights, and the poor fellows moaning and shrieking in their agony, you'd be glad to forget it as quick as you could. However, I know I shall have no peace unless I give you what you want; so here goes.

"It was just before the first bombardment of Sevastopol (which happened, as I daresay most of you know, on the 17th of October, 1854), that I was ashore with a party of our blue-jackets, helping to drag up some guns to a battery on the right of our position, fronting the left face of the Redan. I was only a young midddy at the time, and this was the first bit of fighting I'd ever seen; so you may think I was in as great a state of excitement as *you* were the other day, Miss Ella, when you went to your first ball.

"As for the sailors, they seemed to enjoy it above all things; and so did my chum, Jack Larkington, who was along with me, as he had been wherever I went, ever since we were at the Charterhouse together, before mounting the dirk and monkey-jacket.

"Poor old Jack! what chums he and I were, and what rare fun we used to have together! Dear old Captain Marryat, if he had been alive in those days, might have made a whole book out of our pranks and the scrapes we got into together. I remember once the purser had laid in a stock of preserved fruit, which we were both very fond of; and pretty nearly every night after dark one or other of us used to creep through the port into the store-room where it lay, and grab a good fistful. But old Nipcheese wasn't such a fool as he looked, after all; for, finding his stores diminishing, he made a pretty good guess at the cat that did it, and so one night, just after dark, he took and painted the whole inner edge of the port with white paint; and you may think what a jolly mess I made of myself in creeping through! So next morning there was a muster of kits, and the paint was found on mine; and I was reported, and got it hot, I promise you; and so did Jack, who gave himself up along with me.

"Now, this bombardment, as I've said, was the first time I had ever smelt powder; and as the time drew on (for it's only in books that men are never disturbed by the approach of danger) I began to think a good deal about it. Not that I was very likely to run away (you don't often catch an Englishman doing *that*, thank God); but still, the thought of having to stand up and be pelted at by several hundred big guns at once, wasn't exactly the pleasantest thing in the world; and when I lay down

behind the gabions* on the night of the 16th, I felt (and so felt many other men that night, as they told me afterwards) as if I'd give all I had for it to begin at once, and not have to look forward to it any longer.

"It was just daylight on the morning on the 17th when I awoke; and everything looked so still and peaceful, with the clear sky overhead, and the green hills all around, and the bright blue sea below, that it was hard to believe that those quiet-looking grey mounds of earth, a few hundred yards off, were really going to spit fire and death among us in another minute or two. But just then came the whiz of the signal-rocket from the French lines, and then three shots, one after the other, like the strokes of a great clock. In a moment the face of the Redan broke out in a flash and a roar, and all the air was filled with smoke, and we were at it in earnest!

"Before we had been at work five minutes, you couldn't have seen a yard before you for the smoke, and the noise was like nothing I ever heard before or since—it seemed to split the very sky. We were in a pretty warm corner where we were, for the Redan, though it hadn't cut so many teeth then as it did later on, had quite enough to attend to us very effectually; and for the first half-hour, with the shot flying and the gabions crashing, and the dirt and gravel spattering up all round, I felt a queer kind of tickling all over me, and an inclination to duck my head and hunch up my shoulders, just as when you think some fellow's going to shy a snowball at you from behind.

"But after a time, finding myself still alive, and all my limbs in their right places, I got over all that, and began rather to enjoy it. As for old Jack, it was just as if he had been at a 'skylark' on board ship: he laughed, and whistled, and snapped his fingers at the enemy, and hollowed out scraps of chaff, and seemed to think it the finest fun in the world.

"But as the day wore on we began to suffer. The front of the battery crumbled away bit by bit, and an unlucky shot smashed one of our gun-carriages and dismounted the piece. Several of our gunners had been bowled over, and poor Bill Hawkins, one of our quartermasters, a fine fellow as ever stepped, was cut in two by a round shot at my very side. And at last, just about three in the afternoon, a shell burst right among us with such a crash and blaze that it quite stunned me for the moment, and down I fell as if I were dead.

"When I came to again, the first thing I saw was poor old Jack lying

* Baskets filled with earth, used for strengthening the face of a battery.



dead, with two more of our men beside him. And at that I got quite mad, and sprang up and pulled the lock-lanyard of the nearest gun with one hand, while I shook the other at the Russian batteries. And then there came a bang that was heard above all the roar of the cannon, and up from the face of the Redan went a spout of fire like the bursting out of a volcano, and some of our fellows gave a cheer; but, in the midst of that great uproar, it sounded as weak as the cry of a child.

"When the smoke cleared away, we saw the parapet of the Redan all broken to bits, and one gun sticking bolt upright out of the mess like a post, and the ditch half filled in with the ruins, and the bodies of men scattered about like leaves. But in the midst of it all there was a young officer (not a bit older than myself, by the look of him) sticking up the Russian flag again as coolly as could be, although, as far as I could see, he was the only man left in the battery!

"Our men were so pleased with his pluck that they gave him three cheers, and I jumped up on the gun and waved my cap to him; he took off his in return and bowed to me; and then the smoke rolled in between us again, and I saw no more of him.

"But one night, about two months after that, we were keeping watch in one of the advanced works—for what with the cold, and what with the lesson we got at Inkerman, we weren't often caught napping. Suddenly I thought I heard the dull tread of marching men right in our front; and when I put my ear to the ground, I was sure of it.

"Our lads were soon on the alert, and it wasn't long before we saw a grey shadow creeping up to us, like a mist rising from the ground. Then we just gave 'em one volley and charged.

"We had to fight almost by guesswork, for in that darkness you couldn't tell your right hand from your left. In the scrimmage I got separated from the rest, and was just wondering what being bayoneted felt like, when somebody ran against me and almost knocked me over. I caught hold of him, and just then the flash of a musket showed me the face of the young fellow I had seen in the Russian battery!

"I made up my mind to have him, but not to hurt him if I could help it, so I gave him one between the eyes that tumbled him as clean as a whistle, and one of our own chaps helped me to carry him in. And then, when he saw there was no help for it, he put a good face on it like a sensible fellow; and I gave him one of the only two weeds I had left, and he gave me a bit of black bread—the only food I'd had for fourteen hours, by-the-bye—and by sunrise we were like brothers!

"I didn't keep him long, for he was exchanged soon after for one of the officers taken at Balaklava ; but he was the jolliest company I ever met, and the way he picked up English was wonderful. Why, before I'd learned three words of Russ, he could tackle me in English quite pat!"

"And what became of him?" asked the four voices at once.

"Why, there he sits!" answered the captain, pointing with the stem of his short pipe to a stalwart figure with a heavy military moustache on the other side of the fire; "and when we all go to Russia next summer, you shall see his nice little house on the outskirts of Moscow, where he and I have had many a pleasant day."



A CLIMB UP A STEEPLE.

A PICTURESQUE little town is Market Drayton, with its straggling streets, its quaint old-fashioned church, and its irregularly-shaped market-place, paved with small round stones; but even more picturesque did it look on a certain fine summer evening in the earlier part of the last century, peopled with the three-corned hats, the broad-skirted coats, the flapped waistcoats, and silver-buckled shoes, of the time of George I. The sun was just setting, and the portly burghers might be seen strolling forth to enjoy the cool evening air, attended, in most cases, by their bright-eyed daughters, at whom the smart young 'prentices of the town gazed bashfully from a distance. Here and there appeared a soldier, slightly elevated by numerous "treats," swaggering about in his sugar-loaf cap and brick-dust regimentals; or a huge jolly-looking farmer, with his wife *en croupe* behind him, jogging home, well satisfied with his day's work, on a horse as big and easy-going as himself.

But what is the meaning of this group of boys assembled in front of the town church, and looking up at a curiously-carved stone spout close to the summit of its massive tower, very much as a knot of hungry dogs might eye a tempting joint hung beyond their reach?

"That's where the nest is, as sure as my name's Tom," cries Tommy Hawkins, a big red-haired lad, with a broad, heavy, good-humoured face. "I've seen both the birds go out of it, and come back to it again—just

like their sneaking tricks, to go and build in a place where they know we can't get at 'em!"

"That's true enough," assents Jack Larker, a curly-headed scamp of twelve, always in mischief, and always enjoying it. "If they were at the top of the biggest tree in the parish, I'd have them down somehow; but that steeple's quite another thing!"

"And I *did* want a jackdaw's egg so for my collection!" lamented a little piping voice, the property of a pale, bright-eyed, deformed urchin, as thin and delicate as itself.

"What is it you want so much, Dicky? Anything I can get you?" asks a deep voice from behind; and the little cripple looks up with a schoolboy's intense devotion to his chosen hero, as the speaker lays a hand kindly on his shoulder.

By the way in which all eyes are turned upon the new-comer, one may see that he is an admitted leader among his comrades. In all Market Drayton there is no wilder or more incorrigible scapegrace than "Fighting Bob," as he has been long since named by common consent, and, as the tremendous black eye which disfigures him sufficiently shows, not without ample reason. Wherever there is a window to be broken, an orchard to be robbed, an opposition school to be thrashed or snow-balled, an obnoxious tradesman to be mobbed within an inch of his life, that square powerful figure, and stern resolute face, harsh even to ugliness, are always in the forefront of the battle. There is not a father in the town (his own included) who has not preached upon him in the family circle as a terrible example, nor a misdeed in the calendar of crime which has not been ascribed to him, either directly or by anticipation. *One* man, indeed—an under master at his school, and perhaps the only real friend whom the outlaw possesses—has been heard to prophesy that the scapegrace will make a figure somewhere yet; but the general opinion respecting him is comprehended in a significant shake of the head, and a muttered remark that "such as he never come to good—*his* hemp's been sown long ago!"

But among his schoolfellows he is a king *sans appel*. They are never tired of extolling his prowess, and recounting his feats of strength and daring: how he thrashed "Rough Jack," the butcher boy, who was a head taller than himself,—how he endured the severest flogging which the head master could bestow, rather than betray the name of an accomplice,—how he stopped with his own body a gap in the dam which they were building, till the breach was made good,—and countless other anecdotes

of the same kind, some of which the terrible renown afterwards acquired by their hero has preserved even to our own time.

Such is the youth who, with compressed lips, and a silent, stern composure peculiar to himself, is now listening to Tom Hawkins' eager explanation of the whereabouts of the jackdaw's nest, and Lame Harry's lamentations over the impossibility of reaching it.

"Don't you fret, Harry, my boy," says he at length, patting the little cripple's upturned head; "if there are eggs in that nest, you shall have one before an hour's over."

"Why, Bob, man, you surely ain't going to climb the steeple!" remonstrates the startled Hawkins. "I know you can do anything in reason, but don't go and break your neck over what's clean impossible."

"That's a word I don't believe in," answers the other, with stern coolness. "Hold my jacket, Tom."

"Let him go, he'll soon be glad to come back again," sneers a hulking fellow behind, envious of the prowess which he dares not emulate.

"Fighting Bob" answers only with the black frown which, in later years, many men knew to their cost; and, tossing his jacket to Hawkins, strides through the surrounding throng. The next moment he is clinging to the water-pipe which runs up the side of the church.

In a little country town a small matter suffices to gather a crowd; and the boy is hardly twelve feet above the pavement, when the market-place is already thronged by a host of astonished spectators. The news flies around like wildfire, and group after group comes pouring in, every eye fixing itself on the small dark figure clinging to that huge grey wall. His comrades below dare not shout, lest they should startle him from his hold; and little Harry, hiding his face from the sight of his friend's danger, sobs bitterly, and refuses to be comforted.

Foot by foot the daring climber struggles upward, moving slowly and cautiously, but evidently without the least fatigue *as yet*. You might hear a pin fall as he at length plants his hands upon the cornice terminating the roof of the main building, for it projects nearly a foot; and should he make the slightest slip, or even fail to surmount it at the first attempt, his life is not worth a straw. As the decisive effort is made, the in-drawn breath of the crowd below sounds like a hiss in the dead silence. But the climber's grasp is sure. Another moment, and he stands erect on the roof, waving his hand to his comrades below, who answer with a cheer, which is caught up and re-echoed by every soul in the market-place, like a peal of thunder.

So far so good ; but the worst part of the work is still to come. High overhead, the tower stands up tall, and bare, and rigid in outline, offering neither handhold nor foothold except the little lancet-shaped stones let into the masonry of its sides, barely wide enough to support one foot at a time. But to such spirits as our hero, an additional obstacle is but an additional incentive ; and, halting only a moment or two to take breath, he clambers doggedly up the sloping roof right toward the tower.

"The young dog's got something in him after all," growls a gruff old tradesman, nodding his head in grim approval.

"God send him safe down again, poor lad !" says a woman, tenderly, in a voice tremulous with fear.

"Come down, you young scamp ! do you want to break your neck ?" shouts an angry old gentleman, menacing Bob with his fist. "'Pon my word, you're more trouble to me than all the rest put together !"

"All right, daddy," answers the boy's clear stern voice from above, as he sets foot on the first projection of the tower. "I'll come down when I've got the nest, never fear ; and *I won't come down without it, unless I come head-foremost !*"

Years after, when the name of that unknown lad was echoing across the whole breadth of Europe and Asia, many of those who had heard it recalled that saying, and saw in it (as men always *do* see when the event has happened) the foreshadowing of the speaker's future career.

Upward, upward, still upward !—seeming, to the terrified gazers who watched him from below, to be actually hanging on the bare surface of the wall without support of any kind, so utterly invisible, at that distance, are the slight projections to which he clings. There is no halting or taking rest for him now—once launched, he has no choice but to go through with it to the bitter end ; but it appears to some of the keenest among the countless eyes that watch his progress, as if his movements were less firm and elastic than before—every new effort seems slow and laboured, as if his strength were yielding at last to the prolonged strain. Should it give way *now*, his death is as certain as if he were tied to the mouth of a loaded cannon ; and no wonder if the faces below begin to look dark and rigid. The crowd have ceased even to whisper to each other, and over the whole market-place lies a hush as dead as that which falls over the barrack-square when the firing party are seen taking aim.

And now, at length, he is approaching the goal of his terrible journey. Only a few yards over his head the coveted nest lies snugly in a hollow rift, just above the grim old carved head that forms the spout ; and the parent

birds, disturbed by his approach, flap away with dismal cries. Already his hand is outstretched to seize the corner of the spout, when suddenly the projection upon which he stands breaks short off, and comes rattling down into the market-place below. Quick as lightning he clutches a stray coil of ivy which has straggled round the angle of the tower, and, grasping the gargoyle with his other hand, swings for a moment in the empty air, while the cry from the throng below goes up like the voice of one man.

The lives of thousands of men, the future of a mighty empire, the military renown of Britain for an entire generation, all hang for one moment upon a few inches of mouldering ivy. But the plant growth holds true. The climber's body is seen to jerk itself suddenly upward, and the next moment, with a shout of defiant exultation, he plants himself astride of the carved spout, and thrusts his hand into the cleft which holds the long-desired nest.

"All right, Harry, my boy!" he shouts cheerily, turning to look down at the white terror-stricken face of the crippled child; "here's a fine big egg for you, and I'll take care not to break it coming down!"

"Never mind the egg, dear Bob!" answers the little voice piteously; "only come down safe yourself!"

This, however, is no easy matter; for the climber's strength is sorely exhausted, and he has now the additional disadvantage of not being able to see where to plant his feet. More than once, during that perilous descent, the in-drawn breath of the crowd bears witness to a hair's-breadth escape from destruction; and when he at length sets foot on the pavement, the welcome that greets him is such as might befit the first citizen of the town, instead of its most notorious scapegrace.

"What's your name, my brave fellow?" asks a bronzed, grizzled man, with an upright military bearing, who looks like what he is—an officer just returned from active service in the East Indies.

"Robert Clive," answers the boy-hero, accepting the offered hand with a characteristic air of equality.

"That name will be heard of yet, or I'm much mistaken," says the officer emphatically. "Go and buy yourself some sweets, my lad; and if ever you want a friend, remember Colonel Egerton, of ——'s Foot."

The veteran's prophecy was destined to be realized in a way which, probably, even *he* little dreamed of. Thirty years later, the scapegrace of Market Drayton was being welcomed home by all England as the greatest general of his time, and had written his name in history as Lord Clive, Baron of Plassy, and Commander-in-Chief of the English army in India.

A BEAR-HUNT IN THE PYRENEES.

IT is several years (writes a tourist) since I was staying for a short time at the village of Gouz, which is situated on a slope of the Pyrenees, looking towards Spain. It is a very quiet village, green, fertile, sparsely inhabited by a race of peasant mountaineers, and not a bad place to live in if you do not care for the sort of life that is led in Fleet Street, or the Quartier Latin, or Belgravia, or the best parts of Paris. The fare is simple, the beds are hard, and the air is pure.

While I was there I made the acquaintance of a native whom we will call Jules or anything you please—Jules goes trippingly off the tongue, and it will do, though it was not my fine fellow's name by any means. Neither did *he* go trippingly at the time I knew him. The reason will appear directly.

Jules was a splendid specimen of a hunter. He was a man of granite, only the granite had springs in it. He had a neck like a tower, shoulders like those of the young Alcides, and keen dark eyes well set under brows that shaded them from the light and the wind. I believe he had never known fear.

One winter's day, when the air bit fiercely and the snow lay thick on the mountain slopes, Jules and friends saw bears' traces. Jules whistled, flung up his hands, patted his gun, and gave the word for the pursuit. Off they went, a party of sturdy mountaineers, to hunt these bears. Following the traces, they came to the retreat of the beasts, a sort of hollow crater in the mountain rock overhanging an abyss. It was so narrow you would say that a fox could hardly get inside; but the bears' hairs told their own story in an unmistakable fringe to the angles of the cave. This was the place. The bears were within. How to get at them? There were two courses open to the hunters—to wait till the bears came out of their own accord, which would be the polite course, though tedious; or to force them to show their muzzles. This was the rude course, but it was short, daring, and exciting. Who stands upon ceremony with a bear?

So the party began to fling missiles into the cavern as well as they could—stones, roots, snowballs, anything and everything. But nothing came of it. The stones, the roots, and the snowballs went inside and stayed there, and the bears took no notice. Can they be at home, after all? Yes, the latest tracks led *to* the cave, not *from* it. One of the hunters



got upon the shoulders of a companion, and, flinging down a fresh shower of missiles, shouted into the crater-cavern, "Hallo, Mr. Bear! Are you at home, sir? We are tired of waiting;" and other similar phrases. Suddenly the speaker fell back, as did the rest. Out popped the bears; father, mother, and cubs—the whole family. "Good morrow, gentlemen hunters! you have your wish." That is what we may presume the growl of these bears meant.

Now, a bear is not brave; he is afraid of man; but he is very vain: he likes to be *thought* brave. He is not apt to meddle with you, if you let him be; but he does not like you to think he is afraid, though he is—so long as he knows he is in sight, he walks slowly off, as much as to say, "Well, and what do I care for you?" But the moment he feels sure he is not observed, off he starts at the double. At least, that is *one* way of reading a bear's behaviour,—I won't swear to its being true.

The gentleman-bear thought proper, upon this occasion, to take a path which he believed no human being would attempt—a narrow strip of way, rising on the right to a pointed turret of rock, and running down on the left to a horrible gulf, at the bottom of which plunged and roared a torrent. With a spring and a cry, my friend Jules planted himself in this dreadful path right in front of the bear.

"You don't pass this way, Mr. Bruin, without reckoning with me first."

The bear answered the attitude of attack, stretched his paws, and showed his teeth. Jules put his gun to his shoulder, and fired. The bear, badly wounded with this shot, set up a groan that was echoed from rock to rock, and made a dash at Jules. Then there was a struggle—I may say a wrestling match between man and brute. In the course of the fight, which seemed an age long, though it was an affair of seconds, the gun was flung over into the gulf. Jules, holding back his head to avoid the teeth of the brute, relaxed his grasp for one moment to seize his hunting-knife, and was just able to plunge it into the bear's chest. Out gushed the blood, almost smothering the mountaineer, and the bear, with a last dying effort, dug his talons into the right flank or thigh of poor Jules. Then, terrible to see, man and bear rolled over the side of the precipice together.

Meanwhile his companions and the dogs had been in chase of the she-bear with her cubs. Brought to bay in another part of the mountain-path, the poor beast, taking up her young ones, plunged over into the gulf out of sight. Going in search of them as far as they durst or could, the men found Jules, senseless and bleeding, in mid-air; not *on* mid-air,

but suspended by the branches of a tree. He was still alive, and was alive and well when I last had news from Gouz, but it was a long while before he walked trippingly, I can tell you. The bear had torn off a good big piece of him between flank and thigh, and for the rest of his life the bold mountaineer was—what shall we say?—a lop-sided sitter. I see nothing to disbelieve in this story, for I have seen strange things, being myself a tourist.



THE WRECK OF THE *HARLINGEN*.

ON the 23rd of August, 1826, the British whaler *Dundee*, Captain Duncan, belonging to Messrs. Gale of Deptford, and the Dutch whaler *Harlingen*—Captain Hockstra, belonging to the Dutch Fishing Society—were lying near each other, close beset; the *Dundee* in an ice-dock, but the ice round the *Harlingen* had proved too thick for the Dutchmen to saw through. About two in the morning Captain Duncan saw the *Harlingen* flying a signal of distress, and sent some of his men over the ice to her assistance; but before they could reach her, she was thrown over on her broadside by two flices meeting, and her crew of forty-six left with scarcely more than the clothes they stood in. They were welcomed on board the *Dundee*, and Englishmen and Dutchmen shared alike in their ice-girt prison—no water in sight from the mast-head, and the Devil's Thumb pointing at them with ominous significance. The ice pressed so on the *Dundee* that everything was kept in readiness for a sudden exodus on the part of the doubled ship's company.

Fruitless attempts were made to right the wreck, and to get at her provisions. Only a cask of pork was obtained, together with some cordage and blubber-casks; but these last, and the masts, yards, and spars of the wreck proved very serviceable to the *Dundee* as fuel during the dreary winter she had to spend in the ice.

Finding that there was no chance of getting up their ship, or of the *Dundee's* getting out of the ice that year, the Dutchmen volunteered to leave her.

At four in the morning of the 5th October Captain Duncan called all



hands, and weighed out and gave to the Dutchmen four hundred and a half of bread; he gave them also three casks of pork and a quantity of spirits for each of their boats, and told off a party of his men to help in dragging them over the ice. Having dragged them six miles, both Dutchmen and Englishmen returned to the *Dundee* for a night's rest. Next morning they started again and launched the boats. Wishing the Dutchmen God speed, the Englishmen then rejoined their vessel, from which the boats could be made out under sail.

Ten days afterwards they reached Opiernawick, having lost one man through fatigue. Five, fearing further fatigue, stayed at this place, of whom one died. Next the boats reached Narsvak, where thirteen men were left sick. Captain Hockstra went on to Omenak with the rest, and eventually the bulk of the crew reached their homes.



VENUS AND WARRIGAL.

"THE impudent scoundrel! Just look at this, mamma. I should like to see him at it," exclaimed Sydney Lawson in great wrath, as he handed his mother a very dirty note which a shepherd had brought home. On coarse crumpled grocer's paper these words were written in pencil: "Master sidney i Want your Mare the chesnit with the white starr soe You Send her to 3 Mile flat first thing Tomorrow Or i Shall Have to cum and Fetch her.—Warrigal." "Sam says," Sydney went on in rising rage, "that the fellow had the cheek to give it him just down by the slip-panels. He may well call himself Warrigal, the sneaking dingo! He wouldn't have been game to talk about sticking us up, if he hadn't known father was away. Send him my Venus! Mr. Warrigal must have gone cranky."

Sydney Lawson, who made this indignant speech at the tea-table of the Wonga-Wonga station (and almost made the hot potato-cake jump off the table with the thumps he gave it), was a tall slim lad of fourteen. He and his mother had been left in charge of the station, whilst his father took a mob of cattle overland to Port Phillip. Sydney was very

proud of his charge; he thought himself a man now, and was very angry that Warrigal should think he could be frightened "like a baby." This Warrigal was a bushranger, who, with one or two mates, wandered about in that part of New South Wales, doing pretty much as he liked. They stopped the mail; "bailed up" draymen and horsemen on the road by the two and three dozen together; "stuck up" solitary stores, and publics, and stations, and once had been saucy enough to stick up a whole township. The police couldn't get hold of them.

The note that Sydney had received caused a good deal of excitement at the Wonga-Wonga tea-table. Miss Smith, who helped Mrs. Lawson in the house, and taught Sydney's sisters and his brother Harry, had not long come out from London, and was in a great fright.

"Oh, pray send him the horse, Master Sydney," she cried, "or we shall all be murdered in our beds. You've got so many horses, one can't make any difference."

All the little Lawsons instantly turned on Miss Smith, though she *was* their governess.

"I thought you English people were so brave," said satirical Miss Gertrude; "so you make yourselves out in your history books."

But Sydney, though Miss Smith *had* talked as if Venus was just like any common horse, was very fond of Miss Smith. She was pretty, and only five years older than himself. Besides, he was acting master of the house, and a little gentleman to boot. So he said,

"Be quiet, children; you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. Miss Smith isn't used to the colony.—Don't be alarmed, Miss Smith. I will see that you come to no harm."

And then he began to talk to his mother about what they had better do. Just because he was a manly little fellow, he was not ashamed to take his mother's advice.

Now, Mrs. Lawson was as little disposed as Sydney to let Mr. Warrigal do as he liked. She knew that her husband would have run the risk of being "stuck up," if he had been at home, rather than have obeyed the bushranger's orders, and that he would be very pleased if they could manage to defy the rascal. Still, it was a serious matter to provoke Messrs. Warrigal and Co. to pay the house a visit. She felt sure that Sydney would fight, and she meant to fire at the robbers herself if they came; but would she and Sydney be able to stand against three armed men? Not a shepherd or stockman or horse-breaker about the place was to be depended on; and Ki Li, the Chinaman cook, though a very good

kind of fellow, would certainly go to bed in his hut if the robbers came by day, and stay in bed if the robbers came by night. John Jones, the "new chum" ploughman, whose wife was Mrs. Lawson's servant, slept in the house, and he was too honest to band with the bushrangers in any way; "but then, he's such a *sheep*, you know, mamma," said Sydney.

There was time to send word to the police at Jerry's Town; but who was to go? Any of the men, except Ki Li and John Jones, would be as likely as not to go to Warrigal's camping-place instead of to Jerry's Town police-barracks; and Ki Li would be afraid to go out in the dark, and John Jones would be afraid to ride anything but one of the plough horses, and that only at an amble. It wouldn't do for Sydney to leave the place, since he was the only male effective on it—so what was to be done? But little Harry had heard his mother and brother talking, and as soon as he made out their difficulty, he looked up, and said, "Why, mamma, I can go. Syd, lend me your stock-whip and let me have Guardsman." Neither mother nor brother had any fear about Harry's horsemanship (up-country Australian boys can ride when they are not much bigger than monkeys), but they scarcely liked to turn the little fellow out for a long ride by night. However, he knew the way well enough. Three Mile Flat didn't lie in his road, and if he didn't fall in with any of the Warrigal gang, nobody would harm him, and, finally, there was no one else to go to Jerry's Town who would or could go in time.

So Sydney went to the stable and slipped the bridle on Venus, and rode her down to the flat by the creek, to drive up Guardsman. And then he put the saddle and bridle on Guardsman and brought him round to the garden-gate, where Harry stood flicking about Sydney's stock-whip very impatiently, whilst his mamma kissed him and tied a comforter round his neck. Sydney gave Harry a leg up, and cantered with him to the slip-panels, to take them down for him. As soon as he was through, Harry shouted, "Good night," and gave Guardsman his head, and was off like a little wild boy. After one or two failures, that made his face tingle, he managed to crack Sydney's stock-whip almost as cleverly as Sydney could have done. It rang through the still moonlit bush, and when Sydney lost sight of him, Harry, tired of the monotony of flat-riding, was steering Guardsman stem-on for a grey log that glistened like frosted silver in the moonshine.

When Sydney had stabled Venus again, and—an unusual precaution—turned the key in the rusty padlock, and when he had given a look

about the outbuildings, it was time for him to go in to supper and family prayers. He read the chapter, and Mrs. Lawson read the prayers. She was a brave woman, but, with her little girls about her, and her little boy away, she couldn't keep her voice from trembling a little when she said, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord; and by Thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night."

Then the girls kissed their mother and their brother, and said, "Good night;" and Miss Smith kissed Mrs. Lawson, and said, "Good night," and said "Good night" to Sydney without kissing him (though he looked as if he would have liked her to); and John Jones and his wife said, "Good night, ma'am," "Good night, sir," just as if Sydney had been a grown-up master, and went to bed to snore like pigs, though they *were* dreadfully afraid of bushrangers. Sydney went into his mother's bedroom, and looked at the blunderbuss that stood by the bed-head (Mrs. Lawson had selected the blunderbuss as her weapon, because she thought she "must be sure to hit with that big thing"), and he showed her once more how to pull the trigger. Then he bade her "Good night," and went along the verandah to his own little room at one end, where he locked himself in, and drew the charge of his rifle and loaded it again, and looked at the chambers of his revolver, and put the caps on, and laid it down on a chair ready to his hand. When his preparations were completed, he said his prayers, and tumbled into bed with his clothes on.

Harry wasn't expected home until next day. He had been told to sleep at the "Macquarie Arms," in Jerry's Town, when he had left his message at the barracks, and come home at his leisure in the morning. About four miles from Wonga-Wonga, the dreariest part of the road to Jerry's Town, begins a two miles' stretch of dismal scrub. Harry put his heels into Guardsman's sides to make him go even faster than he was going when they got into the scrub, and was pleased to hear a horse's hoofs coming towards him from the other end. He thought it was a neighbour riding home to the next station; but it was Warrigal. As soon as Harry pulled up Guardsman to chat for a minute, Warrigal laid hold of the bridle and pulled Harry on to the saddle before him.

"Let's see, you're one of the Wonga-Wonga kids, ain't you?" said the robber. "And where are you off to this time of night? Oh, oh, to fetch the traps, I guess; but I'll stop that little game."

Just then Harry gave a *wo-ey*. He couldn't give a very loud one, for he was lying like a sack on the robber's horse; but it made Warrigal very

savage. He put the cold muzzle of a pistol against Harry's face, and said, "You screech again, youngster, and you won't do it no more."

And then Warrigal took Harry and the horses in the scrub, and gagged Harry with a bit of iron he took out of his pocket, and bailed him up to a crooked old honeysuckle-tree, with a long piece of rope he carried in his saddle-bags.

"Don't frighten yourself; I'll tell your Ma where you are, and you'll be back by breakfast," said Warrigal, as he got on Guardsman and rode off, driving his own tired horse before him.

Next morning, just as day was breaking, Warrigal and his two mates, with crape masks on, rode up to Wonga-Wonga. They made as little noise as they could, but the dogs began to bark, and woke Sydney. When he woke, however, Warrigal had got his little window open, and was covering him with a pistol. Sydney put out his hand for his revolver, and though Warrigal shouted, "Throw up your hands, boy, or I'll shoot you through the head," he jumped out of bed and fired. He missed Warrigal, and Warrigal missed him, but Warrigal's bullet knocked Sydney's revolver out of his hand, and one of Warrigal's mates made a butt at the bed-room door and smashed it, and he and Warrigal (were not they heroes?) rushed into the room, and threw Sydney down on the bed, and pinioned his arms with a sheet. The other bushranger was watching the horses. By this time the whole station was aroused. The men peeped out of their huts, half frightened and half amused; not one of them came near the house. John Jones and his wife piled their boxes against their room-door, and then crept under the bed. Miss Smith went into hysterics, and Gertrude and her sisters couldn't help looking as white as their night-dresses, though they tried hard to show Miss Smith how much braver native girls were than English, even if they did not know so much French, and Use of the Globes, and Mangnall's Questions. Mrs. Lawson had fired off her blunderbuss, but it had only broken two panes of the parlour-window and riddled the verandah-posts; so Wonga-Wonga was at the bushrangers' mercy.

They ransacked the house, and took possession of any little plate and jewellery and other portable property they could find. When the robbers had packed up what they called the "swag," and put it on one of their horses, they pulled Ki Li out of bed, and made him light a fire, and cook some chops, and boil some tea. (In the Australian bush the hot water isn't poured on the tea, but the leaves are boiled in the pot.) Then they marched Mrs. Lawson, and Miss Smith, and Sydney, and his sisters,

and Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and Ki Li, into the keeping-room, and sat down to breakfast, with pistols in their belts, and pistols laid, like knives and forks, on the table. The bushrangers tried to be funny, and pressed Mrs. Lawson and the other ladies to make themselves at home and take a good meal. One of the robbers was going to kiss Miss Smith, but Sydney, pinioned as he was, ran at him, and butted him like a ram. He was going to strike Sydney, but Gertrude ran between them, calling out, "Oh, you great coward!" and Warrigal felt ashamed, and told the man to sit down.

"We call him Politeful Bill," Warrigal remarked in apology; "but he ain't much used to ladies' serciety."

When breakfast was over, Warrigal asked Sydney where the mare was.

"Find her yourself," said Sydney.

"Well, there won't be much trouble about that," answered Warrigal. "She's in the stable, I know, and you've locked her in, for I tried the door. -I suppose you're too game to give up the key, my young fighting-cock? But since you're so sarcy, Master Sydney, you shall come and see me take your mare. You might as well ha' sent her instead of sending for the traps, and then I shouldn't ha' got the bay horse too"—and he pointed to Guardsman hung up on the verandah.

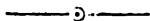
There was no time to ask what had become of Harry. Warrigal hurried Sydney by the collar to the stable, whilst the other men mounted their horses, and unhooked Guardsman to be ready for their captain. Warrigal blew off the padlock with his pistol, but Venus was fractious, and wouldn't let him put on her halter. Whilst he was dodging about in the stable with her, Sydney heard hoofs in the distance. Nearer and nearer came the *tan-ta-ta-tan-ta-ta-tan-ta-ta*. Four bluecoats galloped up to the slip-panels—three troopers and a sergeant; the sergeant with Harry on his saddle-bow. In a second Harry was down, and in three seconds the slip-panels were down too. The waiting bushrangers saw the morning sun gleaming on their carbines as the police dashed between the aloes and the prickly pears, and, letting Guardsman go, were off like a shot. Sydney banged to the stable-door, and, setting his back against it, shouted for help. His mother and Gertrude, and even John Jones, as the police were close at hand, rushed to his aid; and up galloped the troopers. Warrigal fired a bullet or two through the door, and talked very big about not being taken alive; but he thought better of it, and in an hour's time he was jogging off to Jerry's Town with handcuffs on and his legs tied under his horse's belly.



AT THE SIEGE OF STRASBURG.

If Warrigal had not bailed up little Harry, most likely he would not have been taken; for when Harry had got to Jerry's Town, he would have found all the troopers away except one. In the scrub, however, Harry heard the sergeant and his men returning from a wild-goose chase they had been sent on by the bush telegraphs, and managing at last to spit the gag out of his mouth, he had given a great *co-oo-oo-oo-oo-ey!*

After that night Miss Smith always called Sydney *Mr.* Sydney, and Sydney let Harry ride Venus as often as he liked.



AT THE SIEGE OF STRASBURG.

WE were a merry party on New Year's Eve in the year 1869, for six of my great friends from the *pension* (school) had come to spend the day with us; and my two cousins from Belfort were with us too, and had brought all sorts of good wishes from Uncle and Aunt Floriot. And, best of all, Martin Picard, the neighbour's son, who had been my sweetheart ever since the day of Pâques (Easter), three years before, was back from his work at Nancy, and going to stay in Strasburg and help his old master, Père Fauchet; and we were to be married as soon as he had got money enough. So it was no wonder if I felt happier than I ever did before.

Such fun as we had that night! We showed each other all the *étrennes* (New Year's gifts) that we were going to give next morning, and we played *cache-cache* (hide-and-seek) and *Colin-Maillard* (blind-man's buff) in the great wide kitchen, where there was plenty of room; and my cousin Jean-Baptiste, from Belfort, caught Aglaë Morand, and wouldn't let her go till she gave him a kiss, and then there was great laughter. And after that we fell to making *croûtes dorées* (batter cakes), and when Martin came and broke mine in two and took the other half for himself, the girls all looked at each other and tittered—and altogether we were very happy.

But when it began to draw near midnight, out came my old grand-aunt, Mère Madelon, from her dark corner, just like a night-owl flying out of the turret of some old castle—and really she looked as if she *were* one, with her peaked nose and chin, and her great bright eye, and her hoarse hollow voice. She told us to get ready the lead for trying our luck, and

to put the bowl of water on the table, as we always did on that night, for her to look into and see what she could see. And then we put out all the lights, except one little taper on the table—and I wasn't sorry for it, for Martin got hold of my hand in the dark, and squeezed it so that I felt my face all in a flame, and was glad nobody could see it.

But scarcely had Mère Madelon looked into the bowl when she gave such a start that she upset it and spilt all the water on the floor.

"Heaven protect us!" cried she, "what's this? It's all red as blood, with flashes of fire playing across it like lightning!"

At that we all felt terribly frightened, as you may think; so father, to pass it off as well as he could, picked up the bowl again, and told Jean-Baptiste to go and melt the lead and get ready to pour it into the water, while Mère Madelon watched what shape it took. So to work we went, and in a little while all was ready, and the grand-aunt bent over the basin to watch, while Jean-Baptiste began to pour.

Seven times he poured in, once for each of us girls; and Mère Madelon stared at the lead as it fell, as if her eyes were starting out of her head. But when the last turn came, she sprang up as if she had trodden on a viper, and gave a scream that made us all shake.

"Holy Mother!" cried she, wringing her hands, "I had better have died a year ago, when we were all happy, than to have lived to see such omens as these!"

"What's the matter, then, Lon?" asked father, for all the rest of us seemed to be struck dumb.

"Six of the seven have come out like *shrouds*!" answered Mère Madelon, in a voice as if somebody were choking her; "and that means, that by this day year only that one" (pointing to me) "will be left alive!"

Well, the spring of 1870 came and went; and as summer drew on, a report began to get about that we were to have another fight with the Germans—and, of course, to beat them flat, as we did in the time of the great Emperor. And for a time there was great excitement and shouting of "à Berlin!" about the streets, and boastings of what we would do to the enemy when we caught them, when suddenly, no one knew how, it began to be whispered about that we had lost a battle—two battles—ever so many guns and prisoners; then, that the *Saucisses* (sausages) had actually invaded France, and then that they were coming to besiege Strasburg! But we could hardly believe it till we really saw the long lines of white tents and blue uniforms all round us, and men hard at work

turning up the earth for their batteries ; and *then*, of course, there could be no more doubt about it.

And oh, what a dismal time that was ! No more junketings about the suburbs or out into the country ; no more going in boats on the river by moonlight ; no more strolling along the banks on Sunday after Mass. And it was worse when the bombardment began, for then we had to lie crouched in the cellars all day, till we were half stifled, not daring to show our noses out of doors. And then to see the great blazing things come hissing and screaming through the air, and to hear the crash of the explosions and the crackling of flames from the houses ; and when you *did* go out, to light upon the dead body of some neighbour whom you had seen alive and well only a few hours before—oh, dear, what a time it was !

But all this was nothing to what followed. For one day, when we were all in the school together, all at once the window flew in pieces as if a stone had hit it, and there was a great blaze and a horrible crash, and all the room was filled with smoke, and down I fell as if dead.

When I came to myself, the first thing I heard was the sobbing of poor little Mimi Laffleur, who was crouching in a corner, crying with fright as if her heart would break. Luckily, she was not hurt, nor, indeed, was I ; but oh, what a sight I saw when I came to look round ! The walls were burnt black as charcoal, the benches and desks all shattered to bits ; and among them lay the bodies of the other girls, all hacked and mashed till I hardly knew them. Every soul in the room was dead but ourselves, and among the rest those six poor things of whom Mère Madelon had spoken.

I was ill for nearly a fortnight with the fright ; and just as I began to get over it, there came a worse trouble than that. For by this time all the men who were able to bear arms had been formed into a guard for the defence of the town, and Martin had to take his turn with the rest ; and one night we got word that his battalion had been told off to attack one of the enemy's batteries that had been doing us great mischief, and try to disable it.

The moment I heard that, I set off running through the streets like mad, till I got to a part of the works that overlooked the place where that battery was. It was pitch dark, and beginning to rain hard ; but half the women in our quarter were gathered there already, some murmuring prayers, while others stared into the darkness with their hands clasped, and never uttered a word.

At first all was quiet on that side, though far away, to the south we could



hear the dull sound of distant firing ; for the General Uhrich had ordered a feigned attack on that side, to draw off the enemy's attention from the real business. But presently there came a flash right where we were looking, and then another, and then the flare of a whole volley ; and now the crackle of musketry began in earnest, and the fire swayed to and fro like the flame of a bonfire tossed by the wind.

For a time the fight seemed pretty equal ; but at last the firing began to slacken and to roll back towards us, and it was plain that our men were getting the worst of it. So then a detachment was sent out to cover their retreat ; and the fight came so near at last that some of the bullets whistled past our heads. As our men filed in, I caught sight of Michel Tronchet, whom I knew, and cried to him,—

“Père Michel, for the love of Heaven, where's Martin?”

Tronchet shook his head, and said nothing. And then everything seemed to go round with me, and it seems all like a dream after that, till I found myself standing in front of our own house. So I sat down on the doorstep, and remained there till morning.

Oh, what a long night that was ! just as if it would *never* end. Towards morning I fell into a kind of doze, from which I was roused by a touch on the shoulder, and there—there stood Martin before me ! I thought at first it was his ghost, and was glad to see even *that* ; but when I threw my arms round him, it was Martin in flesh and blood, his head bound up, and his face pale as death—but alive still !

* * * * *

How the siege ended, and what was the event of the war, I need not tell you ; but in the spring of 1871, when all the horrors were over at last, Martin and I were married ; and we're very happy, thank God, if it weren't for the thought of what has befallen poor France. But I've never forgotten that night, and never *shall* forget it.



THE PEASANT HERO.

IT is a pleasant place in summer, the village of Bogorodskoë—to those, at least, who are not above plain living, for neither hotel nor refreshment-room has ever been heard of there. The whole place is simply one

of those quaint little clusters of rough-hewn log huts, clinging like limpets to either side of the high-road, which are nowhere seen to such perfection as in Sweden or Russia. Some few of the houses are of a grander sort—actually two storeys high, with brightly-painted roofs and whitewashed balconies in front, that make them look as if they had white ties on. These are the “swell” mansions of the place, and look down upon the poor little shanties around them as a footman looks at a beggar; but, for the most part, our village is made up of little cabins of the regular Russian type, built with no tool but a short axe—one-storeyed, thatched with straw, containing two or at most three rooms, and topped by the cocked-hat-shaped “Tckerdak” or garret, in which the Russian peasant stows his hay, piles his wood, stores his provisions, dries his clean linen (when he has any), and, in a word, bestows everything that he cannot cram into the little kennel below-stairs, where he, his wife, his children, and very often likewise his ox and his ass, his pig and his poultry, and everything that is his, eat, drink, sleep, and vegetate. The beams of Mr. Ivan’s house fit into each other at the ends like the corners of a slate-frame, his door is fastened by strong wooden pegs, beside his big stove hangs the rudely-daubed picture of some Russian saint, with a candle burning in front of it, and in the corner of the room stands a huge “soondook” or wooden chest, painted red, and clamped with iron bands. This chest is the peasant’s greatest pride: he keeps his Sunday clothes in it; he and his friends sit upon it like a sofa; and whenever he changes from place to place, he always drags this great heavy sentry-box of a thing along with him.

But I doubt whether any of you would like to live in a Russian cottage. The roof is just a mixture of saplings and spiders; the walls a mish-mash of wood, earth, and earwigs:* the floor a paste of straw and clay, dotted with black beetles, like the plums in a Christmas pudding!

The hut I lived in had only just been built, so that I had nothing to disturb me worse than a regiment of black ants marching every now and then out of the cracks in my window-sill, or a swarm of mosquitoes coming “ping-pinging” through my open window. And, what’s more, I had a little round table fixed in the ground in front of my cottage, and a low bench put beside it, and there I used to have my breakfast and tea in the open air; and I can tell you that when I was sitting there about seven o’clock on a glorious summer-morning, fresh from my early walk, with my cosy little tea-urn steaming in front of me, a fresh roll on one side, a couple

* The Russian word for an earwig is “Prusak,” or Prussian—a curious instance of national animosity.

of new-laid eggs on the other, and the soft, dreamy, sunny uplands stretching before me for miles, edged here and there with dark patches of forest, like fur trimmings upon a velvet robe—I was as happy as could be. One may be comfortable in Russia as well as anywhere else; and when you come to travel there, you soon find out that it's not the cold dark prison, full of spies, wolves, and frost-bites, that we used to imagine it; that there are other things to eat there beside soap and candles, and other things to do beside sitting all day close to a stove with a woollen comforter round your neck.

While the heat of the day lasts, you don't see much of our villagers. Here and there you may fall in with a stray one creeping along the highway or straggling about the fields; but, as a rule, the bulk of the population don't show up till towards evening. Then, as if by magic, the whole place suddenly becomes alive with all kinds of queer figures: bearded labourers in greasy red shirts, with baggy trousers stuffed into their high boots; shouting children, shaggy as bears and brown as hazel-nuts, with nothing on but a pancake-coloured nightgown well lined with dirt; short-skirted women, with scarlet handkerchiefs round their heads, and round, flat, wide-mouthed faces, that look like a penny with a hole through it; sallow students with straggling black hair, and an *earthy*, unwashed look about them, ogling the brown-cheeked, barefooted lasses who come tripping by with their pails of spring-water; and spruce village policemen dotted with brass buttons, looking on with an air of fatherly superiority. But it is beside the rickety pump in front of the village "shop of all sorts" that the great assembly is held. There fathers discuss things in general, with their mouths full of black bread and salted cucumber; there mothers compare notes on family matters, or drive hard bargains among themselves; and there children of every age amuse themselves with the national sports of rolling in the gutter and throwing dirt in each other's eyes, varied by an occasional bout at knuckle-bones, by way of variety.

But in winter a sad change comes over merry Bogorodskoë. Instead of the charming little village, full of life and enjoyment, you see nothing but a cluster of silent huts, half buried in snow, peering above the great white desert that extends on every side. All around, the bare desolate fields stretch their ghostly wastes to the horizon, while here and there a solitary raven, disturbed by your approach, flaps heavily away with a dismal scream, like some belated spectre returning to its grave. The few peasants who still linger about, muffled in their thick sheepskin frocks, survey you with an air of disdainful astonishment, as if wondering what

business you have here at all ; the leafless trees stand up gaunt and grim against the cold grey sky, like an army of skeletons ; and over all broods a dead, dreary, ghostly silence, broken only by the distant barking of a dog or the moan of the wind through the distant forest. And worse still, if you happen to stroll beyond the village after dark, you will see pale spots of light, like the flame of a half-quenched coal, flitting among the trees, and hear a long melancholy howl, like the wail of the wind on a gusty winter night, going drearily up through the still frosty air—and suddenly find yourself face to face with a huge, gaunt, grey wolf, as savage and bloodthirsty as hunger can make him.

Well, it was on a bitter January evening, the winter before last, that six men were assembled in one of the huts which I have described. It was a room of the common sort, a big bed, with a patchwork coverlet, filling up one side, the usual huge chest in one corner, a picture of the Emperor on one wall, a picture of the bombardment of Sevastopol on the other,* and the portrait of a saint as usual beside the stove, several clumsy wooden chairs, and a low table, on which stood a "samovar," or Russian tea-urn, with a teapot perched on the top of it, while around it stood half a dozen tumblers, full or empty ; for in Russia, you know, it's the way to drink tea out of tumblers instead of cups,—a fashion which burns one's fingers shockingly, if it does nothing else.

Beside the tea-urn stood a small lamp (gurgling and spluttering as if it had a bad cold), which threw a pale circle of light upon the heavy cross beams of the roof, and the dark, sallow, bearded faces of the company. They made a very striking group under the dim lamplight, these six men, and all the more so from the strange manner in which they were behaving. In an ordinary party of Russian peasants you would have heard ceaseless talking and laughing, boisterous jokes, stories of Neighbour This and Neighbour That, snatches of old songs sung in this very place by the same kind of men in the days of Peter the Great, and possibly, if the story-teller of the village happened to be of the party, an old legend or two, handed down from generation to generation since Russia first became a people ; how Ilia Mûrometz fought with the Nightingale Brigand, and how Alexey Popôvitch slew the Flying Tartar. But these men were silent and thoughtful, no jokes, no stories, no laughter, every face clouded with anxiety, every eye fixed moodily on the ground.

* The Russian peasantry are almost childishly fond of coloured prints. In the smallest and poorest huts you find painted daubs of Russian victories, or glaring unlikenesses of the members of the Imperial family.

And what was it, then, which made them so gloomy? Let us listen to their talk, and perhaps we may find out.

"It is a sore judgment on us!" said one who seemed to be the host—a big burly man, with a tangled yellow beard. "The like has not been seen since the year '61, when the wolves came right into the village, and killed nine of our dogs in one night. But then there were many wolves, while now it is only one that does all the mischief; and yet we, as many as we are, can do nothing against him!"

"And how the mischief *can* we do anything," cried a second, "against a brute that scurries about as if he had wings? Pounce he comes into the village, gobbles up the first thing that comes to hand, and off again! and you may try to recollect his name!" (This is the popular phrase for utter disappearance.)

"Well, we must do *something* to stop it," said the third, a grim old fellow, who had had his nose taken off by a frost-bite. "Mother Avdotia's only cow killed last week, poor Ivân Masloff torn to bits on Friday, Feodore Nikeetin's dog snapped up last night, and our watchman's shoulder bitten through—brothers, we are wrong before God if we let this go on!"

"Ah, it is all very well to say we must do something—but who's to do it?" returned the second speaker, emphatically. "When we turn out, three or four together, the cunning rascal marks it, and keeps off; and there's not a man in the village, I take it, that would venture upon him single-handed. Who'll try it, think ye?"

"I will!"

It was a very low quiet voice that spoke the last words; but there was a firmness in it which no one could mistake. The speakers started and looked up. The sixth of the party, seated in the farther corner near the door, had hitherto been so quiet that they had almost forgotten his presence; but now every eye was turned upon him. He was a young man, but little over twenty, though his heavy moustache and square thickset, muscular frame made him appear considerably older. His face was coarse and commonplace enough—the sallow, low-browed, weatherbeaten countenance of the genuine Russian peasant; but there was a nameless *something* about the broad square jaw and small deep-set grey eye that would have made you pick out that man among all the six for any work requiring courage and perseverance. And, in truth, Vladimir Kovroff, young as he was, had already performed more than one feat which the village gossips still remembered with admiration in their winter evening chat round the tea-urn.

"Ah, Vladimir Mikhailovitch!" (Walter, the son of Michael) cried the host, "what's this you're thinking of? You that have only been married two months, to go making wolf's-meat of yourself? Nonsense, lad! stay at home and take care of your wife, and leave wolf-hunting to them that's got nothing better to do."

Kovroff answered never a word; but his features hardened like a mask of iron, as he slowly rose to his feet. All present knew well that when his face wore the look that was upon it now, they might as well try to move a mountain as to persuade him; and they sat silent, waiting to hear what he would say.

"You say that Nikeetin, the butcher, lost a dog last night; did the wolf eat the whole carcase?" asked Vladimir of the noseless man, in the quick commanding tone of one who knows that he must be obeyed.

"No; he hardly got a bite of it, the rascal--that's one comfort!" answered the old fellow with a grim chuckle. "Feodore Stepánovitch heard the dog yelp, and out rushed he and his men with lights and hatchets, and scared the brute away. As for the dog, it's lying there in his yard now."

"Go, one of you, and bring it; and if any one has a sharp wood-knife, let him give it me."

It was curious to see how absolutely this man, the youngest and least important of the whole party, issued his orders, and how unhesitatingly the rest obeyed them. Here, as everywhere, the stronger mind took the lead, and the weaker instinctively followed.

The host produced a huge broad-bladed knife, which Kovroff slung round his neck without a word; and, a few minutes later, the carcase of Nikeetin's dog was lying beside the door. Vladimir drained his glass, and said, "You tell me this brute generally comes about midnight; so between eleven and twelve I shall take this carcase to the cross-roads, and throw it there as a bait for him, hiding myself behind the fence hard by. When he comes up, I shall attack him; and then let it be as God wills. But you, brothers, mind and don't say a word of this to any one, lest my Masha (Mary) should hear of it. If I get off, there's no need for her to know about the matter at all; and, if I'm killed, she'll hear of it soon enough—God help her! And now, Alexey Nikolaievitch, if you can spare me your bed for a while, I'll take a nap, to freshen me for my work."

And a few moments later, this nameless hero (himself all unconscious of doing anything heroic) was sleeping as calmly as if a deadly conflict,

from which he had little or no chance of escaping, were not awaiting him four hours later on.

Midnight—cold, dreary, ghostly. A dead, grim silence over the lifeless village and lonely high-road. A faint glimmer of moonlight, giving a weird spectral look to the half-seen outlines of the dark silent log huts, and making the gloomy depths of the encircling forest seem all the blacker. A shapeless mass lying out upon the hard snow of the cross-roads, and a dark figure crouched behind a fence hard by, with something in its hand which glitters as the moon falls upon it.

Weary, weary work, crouching there in the cold and darkness, with the stiffening fingers clutching the heavy hatchet, and the strained ears watchful to catch the slightest sound. Hark! was not that a low howl from the far distance? No, it was but the wind moaning through the skeleton branches of the forest. Patience yet! Hark, again! and this time there is no mistaking the sound: not the long melancholy howl wherewith a supperless wolf may be heard bemoaning himself, on the outskirts of Moscow, almost any night in the week, but a quick snarling cry, as of one who sees his food near at hand, and wishes to hasten its arrival. And there, gliding ghostlike over the great waste of snow, comes a long gaunt shadow, straight, swift, unswerving, towards yonder shapeless lump of carrion on the highway, upon which he pounces with a fierce worrying snarl that makes even the brave heart of the listener stand still for a moment with involuntary horror. Now is Vladimir's time! To rush out at once might scare the beast away; he must first try to cripple it. The axe flies at the monster's head with the force of a catapult; but the dim light deceives his aim, and it hits the fore-shoulder instead, tearing it open with a frightful gash, from which the blood gushes freely over the snow. With a sharp howl of pain, the wolf turns and flies; but the swiftest foot in Bogorodskoë is hard at his heels. After his long, weary vigil, this breakneck chase is like the breath of life to Vladimir, and over this hard smooth snow his speed is a match for any wolf wounded like this one. Already he has almost come up with the game, and is raising his knife for a sure stroke, when the flying grey shadow in front of him suddenly wheels round, shoots up from the earth like a rocket, and falls right on the breast of its pursuer. Down go man and wolf amid a whirl of flying snow, while a shrill yell rings out on the silent air, for even in the sudden shock of that death-grapple, Vladimir's knife has found time to come home, and the hot blood pours over his face and breast from the wounded

side of his adversary. And so, far out on the lonely plain, with the cold moon looking pitilessly down upon it, begins the tug for life and death. Over and over they roll in the bloody snow, the wolf clutching at the throat of the man, the man burying his knife in the side of the wolf. Crushed to the earth beneath a stifling weight—spent with his long watch and headlong run—with certain death glaring at him from the yellow murderous eyes of the savage brute, the stubborn Russian still fights doggedly on. In the hot fury of that mortal struggle, the fierce hunter nature awakes, sweeping away all memory of his comrades, his wife, his devotion; he feels only the longing to tear and kill tingling to his very finger-ends, only the grim enjoyment of plunging his knife again and again into that gaunt muscular side where the life seems to lie so deep. See! those merciless stabs are at length beginning to tell; the fierce yellow eyes are growing dim, the huge jaws quiver convulsively, and from their edges the froth and blood drip in hot flakes upon Vladimir's face. But now, with a mighty effort, the wolf wrenches his head from the iron grasp of Vladimir's left arm, and with one fierce crunch of his strong teeth, breaks the bone below the elbow. The limb drops powerless at his side. One more desperate stab into the quivering flesh of his enemy, and then he feels the savage teeth fastening upon his throat; everything swims around him, there is a rushing as of water in his ears, a thousand sparks dance before his eyes, and then all is blank.

"God be praised, brother, that you are still alive!" said a gruff voice in Vladimir's ear, as he recovered consciousness; while, at the same moment, a soft arm was thrown round his neck, and a fervent "Thank God!" murmured by a sweet voice that he knew well.

"Where am I?" asked Kovroff, looking vacantly round, and recognizing first his wife, and then his host of the evening before.

"Where are you?" repeated Alexey; "why, in my hut, to be sure, where you've been ever since we brought you in last night. You know, when you went out, we followed at a distance; and as soon as we saw you start in chase of the wolf, we set off after you; but it's not everybody that can run like *you*, so we didn't catch you up till 'Uncle Greycoat' was beginning to get the best of it. Well, when we'd settled him with our hatchets, we carried you back here; and Sergei Antonovitch ran all the way to Sakolniki for the German* doctor, and he's been and tied up your arm, and says you're sure to recover if you only keep quiet."

And recover he did, sure enough; at least, when I met him at

* In peasant parlance, every foreigner is a "German."

Bogorodskoë last summer, he was well enough to run a mile shoulder to shoulder with me, and break a thick sapling like a stick of sealing-wax. And after the race I went home to tea with him, and saw the wolf's head (its skin he had sold to a Russian officer) nailed up above the door of his hut. And the old man who had lent him the knife told me the whole story, just as I've given it you; and he told me too, that from that day forward the whole village called Vladimir nothing but "Mujeek Bogatler," or the Peasant Hero.

MONSIEUR TOPPET'S ADVENTURE.

A GOOD many people have crazes: M. Toppet's mania was pearls. He had made a great deal of money by them, but he had also lost so much that if his accounts had been squared, I do not think there would have been a balance in his favour. Nevertheless, nothing could cure him of his love of wandering over the whole earth in search of pearls. He was just the man to do what the man in the parable is said to have done—sell all that he had to buy a pearl that had specially taken his fancy. When I became acquainted with him, the funny, enterprising little Frenchman had just returned from a pearl-hunt in Scotland.

"I resemble to Jules César," said M. Toppet. "I come, me, to your contree for de pearl."

M. Toppet, unlike Julius Cæsar, had not been disappointed, having obtained some handsome specimens taken from mussels groped out of Scotch rivers. He had seen the Conway pearl-fishers gathering, boiling, and treading, grape-fashion, their salt-water mussels, washing their pulpy "solach," and picking out the not very precious little peas. From Wales he had crossed over to Ireland, and bought Bann pearls; and before visiting the British Isles, he had gone to almost every European river reputed to be pearl-producing. He had been, however, a good deal farther a-field.

For the sake of their former fame, he had visited the now barren pearl islands in the Caribbean Sea, and could tell weird stories that would have been devoured by his great countryman, Victor Hugo, of the huge-mouthed sharks, and almost more hideous gigantic rays, that guard the Californian pearl-oysters.



"De diver descend," M. Toppet would say, "but he not ascend never. De *tinlerero* open his mouth like de *bureau de poste*, and de man post himself to what you call your office of Dead Letters, or else de *manta* hug him like de bear."

From America he had gone on to Tahiti, but it was about the pearl fisheries of Asia—the East, which has given it own name of "Orient" to the precious pellets—that M. Toppet had most to tell. He had made purchases at first hand at Bahrein, and had had personal experience of diving at Condatchy.

"Dey talk about de spicy breezes of Ceylon," he said, "but she smell very bad when de oyster rot. De pearl is not rond and smoot as you see her when she come out of de boil. *Pas du tout*. Dey rub her, and den dey sift her, and den dey make de leetle hole, and put her on de string. Dey look very preetee den, but de smell of de oyster is not good. I go out to sea some time to run away from it, but some time de vind make it run after me. Oh, not at all—dere is mooch of people dat can feel de smell. Condatchy like your Greenveech Fair when dey capture de oyster. De gun fire at ten hour, and all de vaisseaux start off like de racer, and feesh to midi. Den de sea-breeze blow, and de gun fire again, and dey go back and shovel out de oyster promptly. Dere are twenty men to each vaisseau, and de diver descend by de four and by de five. He catch hold of a rope vid his toes and of a net vid his oder toes. De rope have a stone on her bottom. Den he take hold of oder rope, and shut his nose vid dye oder hand, and down he go, and put de net on his neck and fill it vid his toes—vid de oyster he pick up vid his toes. Some time he pick up more dan von onderd. Den he pull de rope as if he ring de bell, and dey pull him up. Den he have a rest and a blow, and down he go again—dirty, forty, fifty time. Sometime de blood squirt out of deir nose, and deir mout, and deir eyes. *Oui, oui*, dey have no pocket, but sometime dey steal de pearl—dey swallow her. It is a life not agreeable. De diver get old queek, and have de boil on de body, and bad eyes. Yes, and it is ver dangerous. Dey pay de priest to pray away de shark. De priest tveest himself about, and fast all de time, but sometime he get dronk. He drink mooch of toddy. Den he no tveest—he tumble on his nose. De priest is von great liar, full of excuse. It de shark eat von, de priest say dat he defend him from eat twenty—if he bite off von leg, dat he defend him from bite two—eat him up whole. For some time during my stay de shark keep away from Condatchy, and de priest say dey defend him, and drink mooch more of toddy. It seems

to me dat to dive is a ting ver facile, and I strip—behold, I descend. But de vater seem to say, 'No, you vill not descend, monsieur; I vill burst your ear, and make your eye jump out, and squeeze out your blood like de vater from de sponge, and crack your rib like de nut.' Den de vater grow cold, and my heart grow cold also. But bang go something in my head, and on de hour I find myself valking on de rock at de bottom. I have good fortunes. I find a rope of oyster, fill my net, vhen, see you, jost vhen I veesh to ascend, I see de shark upon de vatch. I dodge, he dodge. I feel as I vill burst. I fling my oyster at him, and ascend like de bound of de ball, vid M. Requin in pursuit. De men jump from de vaisseau and make de splash to frighten him away. I am pulled on board, but von poor man lose his leg. Vhen his broder say to de priest, 'What good your prayer?' de priest say, 'Tank de infidel. Ve no pray for infidel.'"



A RUSSIAN SLEDGE-DRIVER'S STORY.

THERE are few pleasanter things in the world than a sledge-drive, on a bright winter day, along the Nevski Prospect at St. Petersburg, when the painted houses and gilded cupolas stand out in the dazzling sunshine, and the snow is hard and smooth, and the golden lance of the Admiralty tower glitters against a clear blue sky, and countless other sledges, freighted with every picturesque variety of winter costume, flit to and fro incessantly. Then, with a bright sun overhead, an ever-varying panorama around you, and the brisk motion, and keen bracing air to stir your blood, you may well enjoy your drive to the utmost; while, should you begin to feel chilled, or should a threatening cloud come lowering overhead with its presage of coming snow, you have only to bid your driver turn his horse's head and go straight home.

But sledge-driving is a very different matter on the great wastes of Southern Russia, where you may often meet neither sight nor sound of life during the entire interval between one post station and another. On that boundless level, over which the bitter winds from the Siberian desert sweep unchecked for thousands of miles, a prolonged journey may at times be a very serious affair. It is true that, despite its monotony,

there are few sights more impressive than the genuine Russian steppe, with its mighty desolation and its weird tomb-like silence; but it is rather too much to expect of any man that he should be particularly enthusiastic about the artistic aspect of his surroundings with a blob of wet snow melting down the back of his neck, a pain in his nose as if it were gripped by the tongs of St. Dunstan, and a growing uncertainty as to whether he has any toes or not—to say nothing of the agreeable consciousness that, should his horse fall, or one of the runners of his sledge give way, his only chance will be to jump out at once, clear a space in the snow, and run frantically round and round it to keep himself from being frozen stiff on the spot.

So, doubtless, think the two travellers who are making their way across the dreary moorlands of the Upper Don, on a gloomy January afternoon, the pale light of which is fast melting into a huge mass of leaden cloud, the unmistakable forerunner of a furious snowstorm. Both are swathed from head to foot in countless wrappings; and it would be difficult for even an intimate friend to recognize in these two human artichokes—which look more like laundresses' bundles than living beings—Pavel Petrovitch (Paul the son of Peter), Feodoroff and Tatiana his wife, the most respected and hospitable couple in all Saratoff.

As shapeless in his envelope of sheepskin, but with an unflagging jollity worthy of Mark Tapley himself, the driver faces wind and weather undauntedly, chanting innumerable snatches of native songs between the puffs of his short black pipe. And as the threatening clouds mount higher and higher, darkening the whole sky and making his two passengers glance back at them with undisguised apprehension, he bursts into a loud laugh, and defies the coming storm by breaking out full-mouthed with a rollicking chorus.

"The clouds may gather, dim and grey,
And whirl before the wind;
But we rattle along on our homeward way,
And we leave the storm behind.
The winds may howl, as on they pass,
And shake the frozen tree;
We sit by the stove, and we drink our glass,
And who so merry as we?"

"Never fear, Barina" (madam), he added, reassuringly, as the merchant's wife casts another nervous glance over her shoulder, "we'll be safe under cover before those lumbering clouds have time to sneeze on



us. It's only four miles more to Alexandrovsk, and the snow's not so deep here, thank Heaven!"

"Why, isn't *this* deep enough for you, then, my friend?" asks Feodoroff, eyeing the huge drifts on either side with a very significant grunt.

"Ach, Barin (master), you don't call *that* anything, surely? Why, this is a joke—a mere joke! I've had it sometimes so that you couldn't have seen the top of my head where I sit! Many a time have I fairly stuck fast, and been obliged to get out and cut away the snow, before I could get on; but I'd sooner have a dozen snowstorms than one such hailstorm as I had once."

"Indeed! How was that?"

"Well, I was jogging quietly across the steppe one fine afternoon the autumn before last, fearing no harm, when, all in a moment, the sky clouded over as black as night, and, paf! down it came like a shower of stones! If I hadn't turned my cart upside-down, and got underneath, I might have been killed outright; as it was, the brattle of the hailstones on the wood almost deafened me. And when I crept out again, *there* was a sight! My poor horse was shivering as if he'd been beaten with sticks; the long grass was lashed down as if a troop of horse had gone over it; the very ground was fairly whipped into mire; and, a little farther on, I found a whole patch of ground just *larded* with the bodies of wild fowl, which had been regularly hammered into the earth."

"Are there so many of *them* here, then?"

"Many! you may say that. 'As many leaves in the forest, so many birds on the steppe.' Why, if you were only to come here in July, you might shoot as many in one day as if you had got Colonel Samoiloff's root."

"And what may *that* be, pray?" asks Feodoroff, with the air of one who scents the approach of a good story.

"Eh, father! have you never heard of it? Why, in these parts every child can tell you of Feodor Feodorovitch and his magic root. It's quite an old story in these parts; and, what's more, it was one of our own conjurors that did it—and I've seen his grave myself."

"And what was it that he did, then? Let's hear the story—there's plenty of time for it."

The driver, nothing loth, knocks the ashes out of his pipe, refills it, and priming himself with a whiff or two, begins as follows:*

* This story still exists as a Russian Legend, and may serve as a fair specimen of the quaint, old-world fancies (always with a good moral, however) of the Slavonian mythology.

"You must know, then, Barin, that in the days of our father Alexander Pavlovitch,* there lived at Staroë-Doobno, through which you'll pass to-morrow, an old Cossack, whose right name no one ever knew; but all the neighbourhood called him Ilia Rogâti (Ilia the Horned). And the reason of that was, that his whole head was quite bald, except two little tufts of hair just over his temples, which stuck out like two horns; and men said that neither knife nor scissors would cut them, and that, whenever he was angry, they jerked backwards and forwards, just like the ears of a horse. But whether that really *was* so or not, I can't say, for I never saw him.

"However, there can be no doubt that he was a wonderful *koldoon* (sorcerer), and knew more than any Christian man ought. Not a horse could stray, or a loaf be stolen, or a woman's kerchief go a-missing anywhere in the neighbourhood, but, *paf!* he would know all about it, and where it was, and who had taken it, just as if he had seen the whole thing himself; and for expounding dreams and making spells to cure sickness, and telling men what would befall them hereafter, there wasn't his match in Holy Russia. He prophesied to my grandfather, Tarass Kudimovitch (may the kingdom of heaven be his!) that he should die in the land of the Nyemtzi (Germans) by a cannon-ball; and at that his friends wondered much, for my grandfather had never been beyond our borders in his life, and didn't seem likely to be neither.

"But no man can avoid what was written for him at his birth; for, presently after that, he was taken for a soldier, and went into Germany with General Kutouzoff, and was at a great battle there in the year '5, where God permitted that servant of the Evil One, Napoleon, to prevail over the *pravoslavni* (orthodox) for once, that his fall might be the greater. And when the battle ended, and my grandfather was still unhurt, his comrades began to laugh and to say that the prophecy had melted. But it *hadn't*, though, for the words were hardly spoken when a chance shot from the enemy's guns (almost the last that was fired that day) hit him full on the breast and smashed him all to bits, as a stone breaks a pane of glass!"

"But what about the Colonel's root, my good fellow?" asks Feodoroff, beginning to tire of this interminable prologue.

"Patience, father—"the easier you ride the farther you go." Well, not far from the village where the conjuror lived, there was a certain Colonel of Infantry, Feodor (Theodore) Feodorovitch Samoiloff by name. He

* The Emperor Alexander I.

had served under Suvoroff against the Turkish infidels, and done good service; but being now old and disabled by wounds, he had just settled down quietly at home. And it was a good job for his neighbours that he did so, for his hand was always open, and nobody ever asked help of *him* in vain.

"Now, it was his way to get up early and go about his fields, just as he had been used to visit the outposts when he was an officer; and one morning, as he was taking his walk, he spied a man coming straight up to the door—and who should this be but Ilia Rogâti, the wizard?"

"'Hollo, Iliousha!' says the Colonel, 'what brings *you* here so early?"

"So then Ilia told him a dismal story of his having no food in the house, and no money to buy any; and he spoke in such a doleful voice, and made such a lamentable face over it, that the Colonel was quite sorry for him.

"'You must be a poor sort of conjuror, brother,' says he, 'if you can't keep yourself in victuals; but, however, you mustn't starve for all that. God made us all brothers, and alms withheld from the poor burn the hand that holds them. Come along to the house, and I'll give you a sack of flour.'

"Well, away trudged Ilia, with his sack on his shoulders, looking very well pleased; and the Colonel went back into the house and forgot all about him; but a week was hardly over when he showed up again!

"'What, back again, brother Ilia!' cried the Colonel, laughing. 'You must have a fine appetite to get through that whole sack in a week!'

"'Not so, Feodor Feodorovitch,' answered the wizard. 'When I came to beg that day, I needed help no more than you did: I only wanted to see whether you really had the kind heart and the open hand that men reported of you. And now, in thanks for your kindness, take these two roots; the one will bring you luck in hunting, and the other in fishing, such as no hunter or fisherman ever had yet!'

"The Colonel thanked him, and took them; but, not having much faith in Ilia's magic, he popped them both into a drawer, and there they lay for two years and more. At last, one day he had to go to the drawer for something, and his eye fell upon the enchanted roots.

"'Come,' says he, 'I'm going shooting to-day; I'll just take the old fellow's gift with me, and see what'll happen.'

"So he took the hunting root (as he thought), and away he went; but when he got out upon the steppe, he could see no more of any game

than of his own ears! Look which way he would, not a feather was to be seen; till suddenly his foot slipped upon something, and he all but fell on his nose. And when he looked down, the ground was all littered with pike and salmon, salmon and pike, for hundreds of yards round! and then it flashed upon him that he had brought out *the fishing root by mistake!*"



TRAPPED IN THE ICE.

I.—UP MONT BLANC.

IT was just striking eight o'clock on a fine September morning, when we started on our climb; but, early as it was, a considerable crowd had assembled to witness the start. It is not often (though ascents *have* been made even in December) that the old king receives an embassy so late in the year; and muttered presages were not wanting of crevasses, avalanches, impending storms, and what not, worthy of that objectionable peasant in "Excelsior," who kindly suggests to the climber, in one sentence, every mishap which could possibly befall him.

But what matter? the ascent of Mont Blanc has now become such a commonplace affair, that it really needs an accident of some kind—a storm, an avalanche, a tumble into a crevasse—to raise it to the rank of an "adventure" at all; and, defying all sinister auguries, away we go merrily enough.

Away through the straggling streets of the quaint little town, which seems to consist entirely of hotels and photograph shops*—across the shallow stream that winds through the valley, amid countless islets of gravel—and then a sudden plunge into the rich summer gloom of shaded light which fills the pine-forests that fringe the base of the mountain, and through which lies our path for four hours to come.

It is a beautiful morning, and the bright sun and clear blue sky contrast very prettily with the sombre green of the surrounding woods, and the dazzling white of the vast glaciers overhead, which appear in sudden glimpses every now and then through the openings of the forest. Under this cloudless sunshine, and with this fresh bracing air to stir our blood,

* The statues of M. de Saussure and his guide Jacques Balmat, the first scalers of Mont Blanc, stand in front of the principal hotel.

it seems as if we might almost scale the Himalaya ; and though the path gets gradually steeper and more crumbling, we go on for a time briskly enough.

Seven of us in all—three Englishmen, two guides, and two porters. The latter are by no means an unnecessary addition on such a prolonged ascent, where provisions, ropes, and wood for lighting a fire, have to be carried many miles over the glaciers. The first few hours of the journey are so easy as frequently to delude a raw mountaineer into the belief that the whole affair is nothing more than a mere holiday excursion ; but when a remark to this effect escapes one of my comrades, the elder guide—a grizzled veteran with a face as hard and firm as granite—answers only with a guttural laugh, and a muttered *Nous verrons* (We shall see).

A four-hours' march through the forest brings us at length to our first halting-place, the Chalet de la Pierre Pointue—a queer little pill-box of rough-hewn logs perched on a rock seventy feet high—whence its name. And here we halt to “take a snack” before going farther ; for at this point the real work of the day begins.

But our party presently receives an unlooked-for addition in the person of an American gentleman from Boston, who comes up with his train—two guides and a porter—with a request to be allowed to join our party. This raises our effective strength to eleven ; and our new member—a jovial, good-humoured fellow, and an untiring pedestrian to boot—speedily proves himself a valuable acquisition.

In less than half an hour we are off again, up a steep corkscrew path that zigzags among mighty boulders and vast heaps of *débris*, like some half-created world slowly shaping itself into form—the most marked characteristic of the famous mountain being the wild and formless chaos of its lower slopes, compared with the orderly and almost symmetrical regularity of the vast ice-fields above.

“One might think,” says the elder of my two comrades, looking thoughtfully around him, “that the Deluge had only dried up yesterday.”

Here the difficult footing, and the steepness of the incline, make themselves felt in earnest. The heavy-laden porters gradually fall into the rear ; and, strive to conceal it as we may, the elastic briskness of step with which we started exchanges itself by degrees for that dogged, hard-and-heavy tramp that marks the point at which mind and body begin to pull in opposite directions. Nevertheless, each and all bear up bravely ; and the whole eleven are still hanging well together when we

finally take leave of the rocks, and come out at last upon *bonâ fide* ice—the ice of the formidable Glacier des Bossons.

At this point there is another halt ; for, before venturing upon the glacier, various preparations have to be made. First and foremost, we have to be roped together in single file—the guides in front and rear, and ourselves in the centre ; next, every man has to don the helmet-shaped hood which is to shield his face and neck from the cold, and the blue spectacles which are to protect his eyes from the glare of the snow. Nor are these precautions by any means unnecessary ; for we are already high enough above the valley to feel a perceptible difference in the temperature, and the wind that comes sweeping down from the vast ice-fields overhead brings with it the chilly breath of many thousand feet of eterna snow.

And now, all being ready, onward we go again—over flat stretches of ice, of seemingly endless extent—and yawning crevasses, across which we leap as best we may—and perpendicular walls, cold and blue, and glittering, in which, as if by magic, a stair grows up under the stroke of the axe—and razor-like ridges, crackling and splintering under our hasty steps. The gigantic scale of everything about Mont Blanc destroys all conception of distance ; and it is only by the long hours expended upon the crossing of the famous glacier that we can form any idea of its actual size.

“ This is the place to make one feel *small*, and no mistake,” says one of my comrades emphatically : “ we look no bigger, the whole eleven of us, than a lot of flies on a wedding-cake ! ”

Onward, ever onward—past pillared arcades of silver, and dim depths of clouded steel,* and dark blue pools of water sleeping in floating shadow, and bewildering mazes of glittering points, lance beyond lance. At length, as the sun is beginning to sink, the vast black pyramid of the Grands Mulets, with the little “ refuge hut ” perched on its top, is seen looming against the snowy whiteness of the higher slopes.

But we are not to get thither wholly unscathed. For now the storm-clouds which have been rolling up from every side, mass after mass, for the last hour and a half, burst upon our unsheltered heads in a perfect deluge of rain. And now the strain of the work tries us in earnest. Floundering through half-melted snow—stumbling at every step—scarcely

* As a rule, it is only in the clefts that the wonderful blue of the ice is seen to perfection. The usual aspect of a glacier, unromantic as it may sound, is very much that of a rather dirty sheet of whitey-brown paper.

able to see through the big drops that fleck the glasses of our spectacles, we have indeed a rough time of it before the sheltering door of the little hovel receives us. But, once there, a cheery fire is soon lighted, our wet clothes are spread out to dry, and a jorum of hot coffee—made in a charcoal bucket with three spadefuls of snow, and stirred up with a pick-axe—sets everything to rights.

Simple accommodation, no doubt, as any mediæval hermit could have desired. The walls are of rickety planking, letting in an ample supply of keen frosty air through their numberless cracks. The furniture consists merely of a stove, a table, a bench, and the charcoal bucket above mentioned; and the whole habitation is perched on the crest of a bare black crag, more than ten thousand feet above the level of the sea. But, such as it is, it is to be our abode for the next six hours, the final start being usually made a little after midnight; and, with our lighted lantern suspended from a cross-beam, and our provisions outspread upon the table, we make ourselves as comfortable as possible.

And now, the violence of the storm having somewhat abated, our porters leave us, and set off on their way back to Chamouni; and we, stretching ourselves on the floor, attempt to snatch a few hours' sleep before the harder work which awaits us. This, however, is no easy matter, for, the planks of the floor being all *loose*, the slightest movement sets them jerking up and down like the keys of a piano; and what with this, and what with the stifling atmosphere of the smoke-perfumed hut, I find it best to take up my quarters among the rocks outside, wrapped in a plaid.

And, in truth, I am well rewarded. The storm has now spent itself, and up here, above the clouds, thousands of yards away from the inhabited world, all space seems filled with a grand and sacred silence, broken only by the sullen crash of a far-off avalanche among the distant hills. The great mountain fades gradually from crimson into grey, as the last gleam of sunset dies away from it; and then all melts into the deepening darkness that is creeping upward from the valley, through which the ghastly white of the glaciers starts fitfully here and there. Far below, the dancing summer lightning zigzags along the Savoy Hills, like a fiery finger tracing out their course. And now, above the white summit that towers far away into the sky, up rises the full moon in all her glory, casting a blaze of light over the world of ice around, and throwing out in bold relief the endless file of glittering peaks that stand ranked along the valley, far as eye can reach.

Half an hour after midnight, amid a silence in which even the whispered words of command have a strange and incongruous sound, we descend the rock, and start on our way again, up slope after slope of smooth untrodden snow, bathed in the full splendour of the moonlight. All below is dazzling white, all above deep blue; and round and up we go, passing under threatening peaks, skirting dark crevasses (down which the moonlight strives in vain to peep), and seeming, with our pikestaves working along the snow, and our line of march bending and winding with the ropes that tie us, not unlike a gigantic centipede.*

There are no laggards in our party, and all our guides are hardy and experienced men; but, nevertheless, the labour of marching through knee-deep snow, over a tolerably steep incline, is such as few men can bear for several hours together without great exhaustion; and by the time we reach the Petit Plateau—a deep well-like gorge between the Dôme du Gouter and the main summit—our pace has begun to slacken very perceptibly.

Suddenly the universal stillness is broken by a strange murmuring sound, far away up the mountain, growing gradually louder and nearer. The effect of it in that lonely place is very strange and unearthly, and we all halt to look up in the direction whence it comes; but nothing is to be seen save the mighty shadow of the main peak. All at once a cry of alarm from the foremost guide startles us all:—

“Prenez garde! A gauche, vite!” (Take care! To the left, quick!)

In an instant we are all plunging at full speed through the snow-drifts, without knowing why; but the cause of the warning soon becomes fearfully apparent. We have barely reached the farther side when a terrific crash shakes the air—the whole mountain-side above us seems to break into indistinct and bewildering motion—a whirl of flying snow comes pelting in our faces; and when we look back, the ground on which we have been standing but a minute before is buried deep beneath the weight of an avalanche.

“Rather a close thing, that!” says the American coolly; “but a miss is as good as a mile.”

And now we come to the far-famed Mur de la Côte, the only *really* awkward bit in the whole ascent. In itself it is nothing more than a steep slope of hard snow, rising abruptly from the Petit Plateau; but the

* There are two methods of “roping”—the one being to tie the foremost and hindmost man together, the rest holding the rope with one hand—the other, and more usual, to tie all in one line, the rope being made fast round the waist of each.

tremendous precipice below makes it formidable to raw climbers. However, this is no time for any such fancies. The guides soon cut a flight of steps in the face of the incline, and we worm our way up, one by one, having to our left the precipice aforesaid, and to our right the ridge by which Jacques Balmat of Chamouni, the first scaler of Mont. Blanc, succeeded in reaching the summit, after passing a whole night alone in the snow.

And now the sun rises, and a warm healthy glow replaces the unearthly brightness of the moonlight. As we skirt the black spires of the Petits Mulets, and ascend the broad winding slope of the Corridor, the snow becomes shallower and harder, and the walking more easy; which, indeed, is just as well for us, for at this height (nearly fifteen thousand feet) the headache and shortness of breath, which are the inevitable concomitants of excessively rarefied air, beset us all; and we are not a little glad to find ourselves at length actually at the foot of the last peak, only five hundred feet from the end.*

The actual summit is merely a succession of snow-bluffs, one above another, which are easy enough compared with some of their predecessors; and, a little after ten, we reach the highest point, and hear the faint far-off boom of the cannon which is always fired at Chamouni in honour of a successful ascent. Now that we are no longer in motion, the disabling lassitude and headache are much less violent than before; and we enjoy, with the appetites of men who have been a whole day and night in the open air, our impromptu meal of brown bread, smoked ham, and cold mutton.

"Now, Gaspard, my friend," says the elder of my comrades, turning to the head guide—an old acquaintance of his—"this is just the place for a good story, and you are just the man to tell it; so let us have one, if you please."

Old Gaspard Simond, toughest and gruffest of Chamouni guides, gives a grim smile, which lights up his granite-hewn face like a gleam of sunshine breaking through a stormy day.

"What shall I tell you, then, monsieur?"

"Anything you like, provided it's about mountains and glaciers—you ought to know something about *them*. And before you begin, moisten your throat with some cognac."

Gaspard accepts the proffered flask, nothing loth—wipes his mouth

* The actual height of Mont Blanc above the sea-level is 15,740 feet—three miles to a fraction.

on the back of his hand—and, stretching himself at his ease, begins as follows.

II.—THE GUIDE'S STORY.

"It's a good many years now, messieurs, since this thing happened that I'm going to tell you about; but I daresay there are some still alive in the valley who can remember it, and I can promise you that I shan't forget it very soon. The place where it happened is not very far from here, either; but you'll have to get a little lower down before I can show it you.

"Well, you must know that in those days, when I was young and active, I was very fond of sport, and liked nothing better than to take my gun and be off to the mountains, to see if I could come across a chamois, or any other game. And when there was no game to be had, I would take my rifle and crack away at our target, with the rest of the village lads, till I got to be a pretty good shot. I could show you plenty of prizes that I've won at the 'Tir National' (general shooting-match) but that has nothing to do with my story.

"Now, my great friend among our young men was a lad about my own age, Jacques Couttet by name. He and I were considered the two best shots in the valley; but which of us two was the better man had never been quite made out; and sometimes one of us gained the prize, and sometimes the other. But we never quarrelled about it—no, no! we were far too good friends for that; and I'll be bound that each of us was as glad to see the other win it as if it had been himself.

"Now, from knowing Jacques so well, it came about that I got to know his sister Marie; and I used to bring her back wreaths of the *Edelweiss* (lion's-foot) that grows on the higher slopes, and to carve ornaments for her out of the horns of the chamois that I brought home; and once, when I cut my hand open, she tied it up for me with her own kerchief; and the end of the story was that I asked her to be my wife, and she said 'yes.'

"Well, all was arranged for the wedding, and the lads of the valley were making ready for a great merry-making in honour of it—when, just three days before the day, I thought I'd go out with my gun, and try if I couldn't bring Marie home a chamois by way of a marriage gift; for of late I had been so busy with her, that for a week or two I had forgotten my hunting altogether.

"Marie didn't like my going at all, and begged me to stay at home,

saying she had had an evil dream about me the night before, which had rightened her terribly. But as it turned out that she couldn't remember the dream herself when I asked what it was, and as I saw that it was going to be a beautifully fine day, I just laughed, and kissed her, and told her that a hunter's sweetheart mustn't get into the way of being frightened about nothing—and away I went, merrily enough.

"If Jacques had been there, I should have been glad enough to have had him with me; for, as the saying goes, two together make the road short. But he wasn't at home that morning, and I had just to go alone; so, as I scrambled up the rocks, I began to sing a song that he was always fond of—'Le Brave Camarade'—and as I sang it, I thought of him :*

"J'avais un camarade,
Le meilleur d'ici-bas ;
Le tambour nous rassemble,
Nous marchons tous ensemble,
Allant au même pas.

"Vient un boulet rapide—
Est-il pour toi, pour moi ?
Sur lui tombe le foudre,
Qui le met dans la poudre,
Tout à coté de moi.

"Il tend sa main mourante—
(Nous allions faire feu)
'Autre devoir m'appelle
Dans la vie éternelle—
Mon camarade. adieu !'"

"Well, messieurs, I was a pretty good walker in those days, and it

* This is a paraphrase rather than a translation of Uhland's beautiful lyric. The French version may be rendered thus :

"A comrade once I had,
The bravest of our race ;
The drummer beats the call,
Then forward, one and all,
We march in even place.

"A ball comes winged with speed,—
Is it for thee or me ?
He meets the thunder's blow
In dust which lays him low—
Close by my side lies he.

"He stretched his dying hand
(Just ere we fired he fell)
'Another task befalls me,
To endless life it calls me—
My comrade, fare thee well !'"

wasn't very long before I got up to the place which used to be the likeliest ground for finding the chamois; and, sure enough, in a little while I caught sight of one, standing all by itself on a point of rock. But it was too far off for me to be quite sure of hitting, and I didn't want to risk a miss that would only frighten it away; so I crept along towards it, as noiselessly as I could.

"Monsieur the curé used always to say, messieurs, that there are no such things as mountain spirits, and ghosts, and elves, and all that; and I suppose that *he*, being a clergyman, you see, ought to know best about such things—otherwise I should really have thought, upon my word of honour, that that rascally chamois was no chamois at all, but something worse. I've had many and many a tough day's work in my time, but never anything like that. Again and again the brute let me come just within shot, exactly as if it was doing it on purpose—and then, just as I was raising my gun to fire, away it would go like the wind, skip up on a rock some five or six hundred yards off, and shake its head at me just as if it was making fun of my disappointment.

"I don't know how it was, that, once or twice during this chase after nothing, I felt, somehow, as if I had better draw back; and Marie's warning began to come into my head rather stronger than I liked. But by this time I was in such a rage with being kept chasing about so long to no purpose, that I would gladly have shot the beast out of sheer spite, whether I managed to carry it home or not; and I swore in my anger (God forgive me!) that one of us two should die that day, though I followed the chase down to—you know where.

"At that very moment—just as if those wicked words of mine had been heard against me—I caught sight of something that put everything else out of my head. A little beyond the creature, and just in the direction in which it was heading, was a huge crevasse, too wide, as it seemed to me, for any living thing to clear at a bound; and, with that in front and me behind, I thought I had my game fairly trapped at last. But I was mistaken there, as you'll see presently.

"The chamois *must* have seen the chasm as plain as I did; but for all the notice it seemed to take of it, there might have been no crevasse there at all. It held straight on, never swerving or hesitating for a moment, till within a few yards of the brink; and then it seemed to draw itself together suddenly, made a rush, and shot clear across the gulf like an arrow!

"When I saw that, messieurs, all the blood in my body seemed to

rush to my head at once; for to be balked in this way, after such a long and weary chase, just when I thought myself quite sure of my game, was more than I could bear! I ground my teeth and raved like a madman; and then, clenching my hands hard, I flew at the leap in my turn.

"Ugh! I don't like to think of it, even yet! Just for one moment I seemed to see far down into the cold blue depths of the ice, and to be hanging in mid-air as if some one held me up by the hair of my head; and then I just felt my feet scrape against the edge of the opposite brink, and *down I went!* There was a whirl and a crash, and a tremendous shock—and then I knew nothing more.

"When I came to myself again, I was astonished to find that not only was I alive, but almost sound into the bargain. There was blood upon my face, and my left arm was stiff and sore, as if it had been badly bruised; but except that, I seemed to be not a whit the worse. However, what with the shake and what with the fright, my head was so dazed and muddled, that it was some time before I could rouse myself enough to sit up and look about me.

"Where was I? One thing was clear enough—I had not fallen into the crevasse; for I was lying upon a good hard surface, and the walls on either side of me didn't seem to be more than nine or ten feet high! What could it all mean?

"All at once the whole thing flashed upon me. I remembered noticing, close to the spot where I took my leap, a deep narrow cleft, from one side of which a huge knob of ice projected over the crevasse. I guessed, now, that when I fell back, I must have struck this knob, and slid off it down into the hollow. So I was all safe, and the only thing to do now was to get out again.

"It didn't strike me, messieurs, just at the first moment, that this might perhaps be a somewhat difficult thing to do. It was only when I found that even by standing on tiptoe, and stretching my arms as high as I possibly could, I couldn't so much as get my finger-tips on to the edge of the hole, that I began to see how matters really stood; but even *then* I took it quietly enough, making sure that I'd find *some* way of getting out of the trap.

"My next move was to try and do it with a jump; but no! every time I caught at the edge I fell back again, and did nothing but scratch my hands. Then I thought of making a mound of snow to stand on; but that wouldn't do, for there wasn't enough snow in the hole. Then I tried flinging up the strap of my powder-horn, in the hope of catching it



upon some projecting point; but it was no use—it always slid down again. Last of all, I tried to cut steps in the ice with my knife; but I found that a much harder job than I had expected; and presently, with an unlucky stroke, the blade snapped short off close to the handle, and there I was!

“It was then that, for the first time, I began to feel frightened; and for a time I was just like a man out of his mind. It wasn’t only the fear of dying by inches, bad as that was, that disturbed me, but the agony of being within a few inches of liberty, and yet having no power to escape. If I had been down in a deep pit with mountains of ice shutting me in on every side, I think I could have borne it better; but to see the clear ground close above my head, and know that I couldn’t reach it—ugh!

“But after a bit my head began to clear a little, and I prayed to God for help, and that seemed to do me good; and I took a drink out of my flask to warm me up a bit, and then set myself to think what I should do next.

“If I had had my gun still I might have fired it off, to try and give the alarm; but unluckily it had slipped off in my fall, and gone, I suppose, right to the bottom of the crevasse. Besides, even if I *had* had it, who was there to hear the report, away in the middle of this great wilderness of ice and snow, where no one ever came? However, no man likes to give up his last chance of life, however small it may be; so, as the only thing left for me to do was to shout for help, I began to halloo with might and main.

“But, shout as I might, I got no answer but the mountain echoes, which seemed to be mocking me. And now I began to think, bitterly enough, of poor Marie’s warning to me, and how I had laughed at it; and I seemed to see her sitting by the window of the little chalet, watching and watching, with tears in her eyes, for some one who would never come back. And at that thought, a cold hand seemed to gripe my heart; and to drive it away, I raised my voice and shouted louder than ever.

“Suddenly, far away over the glacier, I heard, or thought I heard, a faint call in reply. My heart seemed to stand still for a moment—I listened a second or two, and then shouted again, with all the force I could muster. This time there was no mistake about it—the call *was* answered. Presently I heard a quick step crunching the snow, and the shout of a voice which I thought I recognized.

“I gave another cry, and the step came on straight towards the cleft

where I lay, and in another moment I saw Jacques Couttet's great broad face peering down at me, with a look of astonishment upon it that I shall never forget.

"Ha! friend Gaspard! art thou there? My faith! but thou must indeed have a charmed life, as our lads say of thee. Come, catch hold."

"He flung me down the end of a cord as he spoke; but by this time I was so stiff and sore that he had enough to do to get me out; and when he did, I lay on the snow for five minutes and more, before I could get to my feet.

"How didst thou find me, then, my brave Jacques?

"Followed thy tracks, lad, as if thou wert a chamois—ha, ha! In truth, the one *thou*'st been following to-day must have led thee a pretty dance! But never mind that now—take a sup from my flask, and come home!"

"And then, as we walked along, he told me that he had come in about an hour after I left, and found poor Marie in such a fright about me, that he made up his mind to follow, and satisfy himself that all was well; and very lucky it was for me that he did so, as you see.

"Well, the wedding came off three days later; and after that, not to frighten Marie any more, I left off hunting, and turned guide instead. But although it's so many years ago, I've not forgotten that day's work yet, and don't think I ever shall.

"And now, messieurs, we had better be moving, for we've got a long way to go to get home."



RUNNING AWAY TO SEA.

NOT very long ago a little chap ran away from school to go to sea. I chance to know almost exactly how he felt, and all that happened to him; so I can give a true as well as a full and particular account of his adventures. But as it might hurt his feelings if I were to give his right name, we will call him Jack Sprat.

Jack's notion was that all sailors were jolly fellows, who led very jolly lives. They might have dangers to encounter, but, if they *were* wrecked, they were almost sure to get back to England somehow, or if they didn't

to have beautiful desert islands waiting for them, which was even better. And then their life was so unlike school—so free-and-easy. There were such *chances* in it, too. You might begin as cabin-boy in a merchantman (hadn't Captain Cook, and Sir Cloudesley Shovel, and ever so many of the famous fellows, been cabin-boys either in the merchant service or the navy?); but then you might be the first of a crew of twenty gallant British tars to board a pirate, and haul down the black flag with its death's-head and cross-bones, the said pirate being manned by three hundred bearded ruffians, black, brown, and renegade-white, and carrying thirty long brass guns, which *your* ship had fought for five hours, muzzle to muzzle, with a rusty little bit of an iron cannon, suddenly remembered and dragged out from under the long boat; and then, before you could say Jack Robinson, you might find yourself cadet,—midshipman,—first lieutenant,—captain, of a dashing frigate, sink or capture two French first-rates and half a dozen corvettes in single combat, and take no end of American clippers. How the Portsmouth bells would ring when it was known that the "flying, fighting *Arethusa*" had anchored at Spithead with a kite-tail of fresh prizes under her stern! The mayor and corporation would come down to welcome her heroic young captain, when he landed, for the first time during his brief but eventful life at sea, upon his native soil. Mamma would not be sorry *then* that he had run away from school; and wouldn't "the girls"—sisters, and cousins, and all the rest of them that you used to lark with under the mistletoe—envy the one that had hold of your sound arm (one arm, of course, would be in a sling, but sure to get quite well the week after next), when you walked to church the first Sunday after you got home, in your cocked hat, and blue coat, and white trousers, and with your gold epaulettes, and sword (hacked like a saw), and a baker's dozen of medals on?

Not a hundred miles from one of the suburbs of London, there used to be—perhaps there is still, and so I cannot give its whereabouts more plainly—a Boys' School, which Jack declares to have been "the beastliest hole that ever called itself a school." Outside its wall, from week's end to week's end, the little chaps were scarcely ever allowed to go, except on Sundays; when the school was marched, two and two, like Noah's ark beasts and birds, to church. Now this confinement was one thing which Jack did not relish; and, for another thing, he had *not* been accustomed to be knocked about at other people's pleasure. Accordingly, to secure liberty, the sagacious Jack made up his mind to turn cabin-boy.

He resisted the blandishments of the basket-woman, and saved up two weeks' pocket-money. The eventful morning came at length, and Jack woke early in the autumn moonlight. All the other fellows in the long dormitory were sound asleep. He felt rather scared, but he said his prayers before he crept out of the room. Perhaps he hurried them over rather, and perhaps he did not feel quite sure that boys who were running away had any business to say prayers; but still he *did* say them, partly from habit, and partly because he felt that people who were going to sea could not make sure for a moment what would happen to them. Then he went out of the room on tiptoe, carrying the shoes which he had smuggled up to bed the night before, instead of pushing them into his pigeon-hole in the shoe-rack to be cleaned; and stole almost as silently as a shadow down the stairs. Boards *would* creak, though, when he was passing the bed-room doors he dreaded most; and he had to make a rush past the tall old clock on the last landing. "Tick-tick, tick-tick," it said. "I'm awake—I've been awake all night. I know what's going on, if every one else is asleep."

In the hall Jack put on his shoes, and prepared to tackle the front door. There were two bolts to shoot back, and a bar to take down, and a chain to unsnack, and then a huge key to turn. Jack almost tumbled off the tottering scaffolding of hall chairs, etc., he constructed to reach the top bolt; but all the obstacles except the lock were overcome at last. The key for a time would only give a grating creak that made Jack shiver—it obstinately refused to turn. With a wrench that almost put his wrists out of joint, Jack twisted it round. A moment afterwards he had lifted the latch, and was running down to the great gates, leaping over the shadows of the trees that stretched out gaunt black arms, as if they wanted to trip him up or catch him by the ankle. Jack had expected that he would have to clamber over the great gates, but—hooray!—the little door in one of them had been left unlocked, and was idly swinging backwards and forwards in the breeze. Jack had time to turn round and shake his fist at the rusty old bell that wouldn't ring *him* up to work before breakfast; and then he plunged into the outside moonlight, and felt *free*, although he still ran on as if the whole pack of his tormentors were after him.

It was easy enough for him to find his way into London—he had only to follow his nose—but it was a good while before he could find his way to "the Docks." When he asked his way to them, people said, "*What docks, you young silly?*" and others told him to go to such-a-street, and

turn down such-another-street, and anybody would tell him there ; but Jack didn't know where such-a-street and such-another-street were, any more than he knew where the Docks were.

When he reached Ratcliff Highway at last, and threaded his way through the throng of greasy, ragged, unshaven labourers still waiting to be hired outside the gates, the London Docks were in full swing of business. The bustle pleased Jack at first. Men were hewing sugar-hogs-heads open with great axes, white coopers were hammering away at casks, blue custom-house officers were gauging casks, men were trundling casks, casks in thousands stood along the quays. Dangling from top floors of the tall warehouses, and over the mine-like holds of the ships, boxes, barrels, crates, bales, hogsheads, and huge bundles of hides and sheepskins, and skeins of jangling iron bars, were everywhere going up or down. Tea-chests were being shot into lighters, like boys sliding down a hill. There was a smell, too, here of sugar, there of tobacco, and yonder of vinegar, or drugs, or brandy—and everywhere of tar—that somehow sharpened Jack's desire to be a sailor. But he soon felt half disappointed : nobody in the Docks looked jolly. The men who were crying " Heave—heave—heave all together !" as they strained at the winches, looked far more like depressed dustmen than dashing mariners. Even the real sailors had nothing rollicking about them. They hadn't broad turnover collars to their shirts, low-waisted breeches, and long-quartered pumps. Some of them had their trousers braced up almost to their armpits, and—worse still—instead of hailing him with a " What cheer, messmate ? " some of them gave Jack a shove, and swore at him, if he happened to stumble against them, as he caught his foot in the great iron mooring-rings, or groped his way under and over the gangways, chains, and hawsers that everywhere stopped the way. Some of the mates, to be sure, had gilt bands round their caps and gilt buttons on their blue coats, but the greasy, white-seamed uniforms had a very shabby-genteel look ; and Jack did not like to see sailors quill-driving on the other side of the little tables at which the cargoes were being checked off.

However, there were the ships, at any rate, some of them with bunting flying, or a loose sail bellying out, or sailors' clothes hung up to dry—real big ships from all parts of the world. When Jack thought of the pure sea to which they were accustomed, he wondered that they did not fidget in the stagnant, muddy-green dock-water. But some of the ships did not smell very sweet ; unpleasant whiffs came from them of bilge-water, perspiring sheepskins, and putrid horns and hides.

"But I needn't go in a ship that carries nasty things like those," thought Jack; "I've plenty to pick from."

He made up his mind, for one thing, that he wouldn't go in a steamer, or in a blistered, rusty, old-fashioned sailing-tub, with a bow as broad as its stern, and its grey ragged rigging all in a tangle. At last he found a craft just to his taste, with a clipper bow, and raking masts, and gilt stars on the catheads, and bright brass belaying-pins, and deck as white as milk, and ropes coiled down on it like Catherine-wheels. A placard lashed on to her shrouds announced that she was bound for Hong Kong, and "the East" was just where Jack wanted to go to. So he went up to some men who were swinging on a stage, painting the clipper's sides, and said, as knowingly as he could, "Can you tell me if this ship is in want of a hand?"

"Can't say, sir," answered one of the men, with a grin; "better ask the mate. There he stands by the gangway."

"If you please, sir, I want to go to sea," said Jack to the mate, very respectfully.

"Do you? Go back home, you little fool."

Ship after ship he tried with no better success, and what *that* mate said was quite polite compared with the answers Jack got from some of the mates and captains. Where there were men on board, too, they made fun of him; told him that they had a monkey already, and disagreeable things of that kind; and one sulky old cook dabbed a dirty dishclout into his face, and threatened to send a bucket of water over him, if he didn't make tracks tarnation slick out of *his* galley. Jack did not try an American ship again after that.

Just as he was giving up hope, Jack got his ship.

A red-faced man came reeling down to a boat that was waiting to pull him to a ship which was being warped out of dock. He overheard Jack speaking to a captain, and sang out, "Want to go to sea, eh? Come along wif me; I want a boy, an' one's as good as another."

Jack did not much like the look of the man, but he was ashamed to hold back. He scrambled down into the boat, and presently was scrambling up the side of the *Onyx*, 960 tons, bound for Port Natal. The *Onyx* was *not* A 1, and she *didn't* carry "a cow and an experienced surgeon." As soon as the captain got on board, he tumbled into his cabin to sleep off his drink. Jack enjoyed the bustle of the river as they were being towed down to Gravesend, but felt rather uncomfortable because no one gave him anything to do.

"If you please, sir, I've come on board to work," he said to the second mate.

"Oh, have you? Where did *you* sign articles? I thought you was the skipper's kid. Don't distress yourself, *he*'ll find you plenty to do; we've none too many hands on board. Make yourself happy whilst you can; it's a poor soul that never rejoices."

This was the nearest approach to his idea of sailors' talk which Jack had heard, and his heart warmed accordingly to Mr. Croggan. When the *Onyx* brought up for the night at Gravesend, he asked Mr. Croggan where he was to turn in—Jack was just going to say "go to bed," but remembered the proper phrase in time.

"Why, where did you put your chest?" asked Mr. Croggan; and when he learnt how Jack had come to sea, he gave a long whistle, and said, "You—poor—little—fool! why, what a born idiot you must be!"

Jack slept that night on the floor of the deck-house, which the second mate and the carpenter shared, and thought himself very lucky to get such shelter, for the rain thumped down on the roof like marbles. The next morning the *Onyx* took her pilot, weighed anchor, and beat out to sea. Captain Mitchell came on deck in the vile temper which was "his usual," as the Scotch say, unless when stupefied by drink.

"Why didn't you bring me my coffee?" he growled to Jack, and then he boxed Jack's ears with his clenched fists. The first mate, Mr. Munens, was not much better tempered than the skipper. The carpenter and two or three of the foremast men were hearty fellows, but the rest of the crew were blackguards.

Off Margate the pilot insisted on bringing up, although the skipper wanted to crack on. When Jack looked at the Margate lamps, twinkling through the rushing rain, and over the wild black waters, he almost wished himself back at Elm House. *How* he longed to be at *home*! The watch were clustered round the galley, out of which the howling wind blew a long line of red sparks; the rest of the men were under cover in the forecabin; Mr. Croggan, swathed in oilskins, was tramping to and fro upon the poop; but Jack, wet to the skin, was shivering, waiting for orders outside the door of the cabin in which the skipper, and the first mate, and the pilot were taking their grog. Every now and then a damp sheet dangling on the gallows came thump against Jack's face, and loneliness had so taken the pluck out of him, that he felt half inclined to cry. There was nothing dignified in his distresses. He had found out that he was nobody on board; that if he had a moment to

spare from the captain's work, he was at the beck and call of everybody, and would be expected to do all the dirtiest jobs. As he thought of what he had already done, he grew sick again; and because he was hanging over the side, instead of waiting to receive the captain's orders to fetch some more hot water from the galley, he got another hiding. Poor Jack did not feel much like the gallant captain of the "flying, fighting *Arcthusa*," when he crept into the dog-kennel of a bunk that had been assigned him, together with a few rough slop-clothes that had been thrown at his head, as a bare bone might be pitched to a mangy, stray, mongrel cur. The next morning the cable parted, the remnant fragment thumping against the bows with a dull thud, distinguishable even in the roaring of the storm. The ship swung round, and floundered broadside towards the land. Sea-sick Jack almost hoped that she might drive ashore. Sea-sick as he was, he could not help seeing and wondering at the same hope in the half-drunken skipper's eyes. But the pilot, and the mates, and the men rushed forward like race-horses; another cable was paid out, and the *Onyx* was brought up in water just deep enough to float her.

"What are you skulking for there, you young lubber?" was Captain Mitchell's *Ti Deum*, and Jack received his thank-offering in a rope's-ending. The skipper swore fiercely at the luggers that swooped down on and skimmed round the *Onyx*, like a flock of dark-winged sea-birds; but he was obliged to go ashore in one of them to buy a new anchor and cable; and when the anchor had been fished, the skipper relieved his feelings by giving Jack a drubbing, for which he did not take the trouble to invent a reason.

"Run up and shake out the main-royal, you lazy young whelp!" the skipper bellowed to Jack in the fair weather that followed the foul, as the *Onyx* stood down Channel. Jack, whose sea-sickness had passed, was delighted at the chance of getting something sailor-like to do, but he had the vaguest idea of where and what the main-royal was; and because he hesitated, the skipper was going to lick him again. The pilot, however, interposed, and gave Jack a dim notion of what he was expected to do. He did not run up the rigging very nimbly—especially when he had no rattlins to help him; he turned giddy every now and then, and clutched the shrouds as if he could not "run" or "shin" up another foot; he fumbled sadly with the unfamiliar sail—fancying every moment that he was going to be shaken off the yard like a rotten pear; but still, as the pilot said, when Jack came down (beginning at last to

recover his old opinion of his special aptitude for a sailor's life), his performance was "very fair for a beginning." Jack had expected louder laud than that; he had thought that even the skipper would clap him on the back. The skipper *did* clap him on the back—in a very unpleasant manner—the next time he ran foul of Jack when the pilot was not by.

The pilot was a very trifling check on the skipper's bad temper, but still Jack looked ruefully on the boat that carried the pilot ashore.

When Eddystone's star had faded from the sky, Jack began to think that he had been brought on board the *Onyx* simply to be tormented. With the rowdy portion of the crew, Jack was sharp enough to see, the skipper wanted to curry favour. The first mate, too, he seemed to want to win over—and to be puzzled because Mr. Munnens did not respond more cordially to his advances. Mr. Croggan and the carpenter he snubbed, and the jolly fellows in the forecastle, who were far and away the best seamen in it, he was so fond of "bully-ragging," that even Mr. Munnens, well as he liked to hear any one blown up, when he had not the chance of blowing anybody up himself, used to put in his oar on the other side, simply out of the sympathy which every good seaman feels with another good seaman when his seamanship is unjustly impugned.

You must not suppose that Jack was always miserable; no boy can be, however badly he is treated. Jack soon got his sea-legs, and grew proud of being able to go aloft without feeling at all funky. When Mr. Croggan, as was often the case, had the sole command during the captain's watch, and the drunken captain was snoring in his berth, Jack was safe. Mr. Croggan was as kind to him as he could be, and the good fellows, who happened to be all in the captain's watch, wouldn't let the other men treat Jack as a football. Besides, the savagest people cannot keep on being savage for ever. They will let you alone sometimes, because they cannot get any fun out of plaguing you—especially if they see that you are beginning not to mind—and that was how Jack began to feel after a bit.

And then he saw Madeira—a silver mist rising out of a golden sea; and porpoises were harpooned, and dolphins grained, and bonito hooked, and flapping sharks hauled on board with a lump of pork down their horrid horseshoe mouths, and flying-fish fell on deck; and Jack managed to get a taste of them all; and as he ate, he thought what a much more heroic personage he was (though he *was* kicked about like a dog) than the fellows who used to lick him at Elm House, but who had not the pluck to run away from Saturday's "resurrection-pie."

Jack did not much relish crossing the Line, however. He was the only one on board the *Onyx* who had not crossed it before, and the savage fellows made up for their lack of other fun by "taking it out of" Jack extensively, and even the jolly fellows thought that he was fair game then. Jacked was lathered with unmentionable soap, the huge shaving-brush was dabbed into his mouth, the skin was rasped off his cheeks and chin with a jagged bit of rusty iron hoop, and then—up flew his heels, and he was floundering in a tub of filthy water. And when he had scrambled out, in spite of the many hands that tried to keep his head under, and was gasping for breath as if he must shake to pieces, bucketful after bucketful of water was shot into his face to drive the breath out of him again.

But Jack recovered his breath, and the lumbering, leaky old *Onyx* waddled on with him into the South Atlantic. He saw the Southern Cross and the Magellan Clouds, and whales sending up silvery jets, and routing about in the waves like monstrously magnified pigs in a monstrously magnified straw-yard. He pitched biscuit to the huge grey and white albatrosses when they leisurely folded their wide double-jointed wings in a calm, and swam up to the side like tame ducks.

But dirty weather soon set in, and the pumping—which had been throughout the voyage a cause of grumbling—became more fagging than ever, as Jack, whose hands were skinned by the ropes and his back stiff with the bending, had good reason to know. The men no longer chanted

"They say, old man, your horse will die—
They *say* so—and they *think* so—"

as the beam was jerked up and down. Mutinous growls were the chorus now. The way the skipper behaved in bad weather puzzled the men. He would scarcely take a stitch of canvas off the ship when she was lying over so that her yards nearly dipped into the water.

"It's my belief," Jack heard one of his friends say to another, "that the old man's either mad, or else he's bribed to sink the ship, and gets so drunk he forgets he'll go down in her. If Mr. Munnens would put the skipper in irons, I'd stand by him."

The rowdies, however, although they did grumble at the pumping, were on the skipper's side. He raved at *them*, too, sometimes; but he maintained no discipline. He made very little fuss even when the mate told him that the cargo had been broached, and a barrelful of spirit-bottles stolen.

The skipper was carrying on as usual one day, although black ragged clouds, like dusty cobwebs, were fast mounting from all sides of the horizon. The distant sea was bristled by the hurricane that was rushing towards the ship.

As Mr. Croggan shouted, "Stand by the royal halyards!" the royals flew in rags from the bolt-ropes, and the royal-masts snapped like twigs. The skipper, drunk as usual, came reeling from his cabin; but Mr. Munnens rushed before him.

"All hands on deck!" the mate bellowed, and his watch came tumbling up half drunk. Down came the hail in lumps like jagged pebbles. Down, too, through the night-black sky shot a great *lump* of lightning, and sank like a seething mass of molten metal into the black sea. Blue and pink and yellow zigzags constantly scarred the sky, and peal after peal came the awful overlapping thunder. Tacks and sheets doubled like whip-lashes; the fiercely-flapping canvas made a thunder of its own; the thick main-yard was snapped in the slings as you might break a lath across your knee. The *Onyx* lay over so that it seemed impossible she could ever come up again. When Jack went up the weather-rigging—tauter than harp-strings—behind two of his old friends, to give a hand in shortening sail, his heart was in his mouth; and though he expected to be whirled off like a withered leaf, yet he had just time for one thought, that stabbed him like a knife, about his mother and his sisters from whom he had run away.

But the *Onyx* did right herself when they got the canvas off her, and was still afloat next morning, when the sky was bright again, and the zebra-striped Cape pigeons were flitting blithely over the subsiding sea. Masses of seaweed, too, were floating on the waves. The captain, however, obstinately refused to follow the mate's advice to bear up for Table Bay, and ordered out the boats.

"You're robbing your owners, if you desert her, Captain Mitchell," said Mr. Munnens. "I'll stake my life we can take her into Cape Town."

"Obey orders, if you break owners, sir," growled the skipper.

"Obey orders, and break underwriters, Captain Mitchell—that's it, isn't it?" answered the mate. "I won't leave her while she'll float: who'll stay with me?"

Most of the men went over the side with the captain, but Mr. Croggan, and the carpenter, and Jack, and three or four of the men, stopped with Mr. Munnens; and, after a very anxious day, Table Mountain stood up



clearly dark against the sky, and the *Onyx* floundered past Robben Island, and let go her anchor in Table Bay.

The underwriters made a handsome present to the mates and the men who had stuck to the *Onyx* when they got to hear of what had happened, since she had been insured shamefully above her value. Perhaps the underwriters might have had something unpleasant to say to Captain Mitchell; but he and the men who went with him never turned up again.

A very different skipper from Captain Mitchell took Jack home out of charity; but though he had been kindly treated, Jack respectfully declined the captain's offer to take him as an apprentice when they got back to England. A brown, shabby little urchin was Jack when he reached home. He was considerably ashamed of himself, as well as his shabbiness, when his mother and sisters rushed out to meet him; but they seemed so proud of his brownness that Jack grew proud of it too, and bragged of his adventures, especially when he found that he was not to go back to Elm House.

He is rather apt to give himself airs when nautical matters are discussed, on account of his extensive maritime experience; but he has never gone back to sea—as a sailor.



THE DEMON WOLF.

ONE huge wolf had for years been the terror of the *byga*. Other wolves were shot, or died natural deaths, or wandered to other districts; but, season after season, generation after generation, the Demon Wolf, as it was called, had haunted the *bygd*. Old people told stories about it to their grandchildren, and the children would run in to their grandparents, shouting that they had seen the grey and gingerbread-coloured monster. It was especially bold in winter, but at all times of the year it made its appearance—in summer as well as in winter, coming close up to the homesteads. It brushed against the moss-lined log walls of farm houses, and peeped into housemen's cottages. It leaped garden-fences, and trampled down the peas and potatoes. It clambered on to turf-thatched roofs and howled most dismally in the small hours. It once chased a lamb into an open church, and carried it off—its white wool



stained as red as the church walls—*in facie ecclesie*. It pounced upon a little maiden drawing water at a well, and would have carried her off, too, had not her father chanced to hear her cries. When bird-snarers went out on their snow-shoes to look at their traps, ten chances to one the Demon Wolf had devoured the ptarmigan that had been caught. It chased sledges at the head of a howling host, until the horses gave in. In warmer weather it played havoc on the calves, sheep, and goats on the *sacters*. Lonely charcoal-burners, seated by their kilns, started when, turning round, they saw the Demon Wolf's wicked eyes fixed upon them.

Everybody, indeed, stood in dread of the Demon Wolf, because, as the name shows, it was not supposed to be a mere wild beast. It had been often fired at and hit, but the bullets—at least, so the firers said—had bounded back like india-rubber balls.

It was believed to be, if not actually a devil incarnate, a wolf possessed by a devil; and great was the awe it inspired throughout the *bygd*.

Scythes were swishing through lush grass, and pungently fragrant hay was being tossed and raked. Trout were leaping in the mountain streams, water-fowl were flying overhead, hares were munching juicy young corn. Cattle-bells were tinkling, cow-horns were being blown, and sheep and goat-calls sung. Loudly barking collies were vigilantly watching flocks and herds, on which wheeling eagles threatened to swoop.

Down came one upon a kid—the pet kid of the *sacter* maiden. Screaming, she rushed to the rescue, and drove off the bird; but scarcely had the eagle dropped the kid before the Demon Wolf, coming apparently out of the earth, pounced upon it with a most vicious snarl. The wolf would have carried it off, had not the maiden's lover made his appearance with as mysterious a suddenness. The wolf decamped, casting back a scowl of blighting hate.

Up to that time the two young people had not been declared lovers, but they became so, when, after the young man had carried the kid into the *sacter* cottage, and helped its mistress to bind up its wounds, the two sat chatting over the meal which the grateful Kari hastily prepared for Oddo.

"Thou art sweeter even than thy cream, Kari," said Oddo, "and of thee one can never have too much. Thy face is more beautifully white and red than thy wild strawberries, and thy breath more fragrant far than theirs."

Parents gave consent, and the affair was settled.

Biddings were given from house to house, the wedding guests, laden with wedding gifts, assembled at the bridal house, symbolically decorated with two young trees holding one another in their arms. Kari doffed her maiden dress, was arrayed in her rich bridal one, and crowned with her silver coronet, the banquet of cheese, cake, butter, treacle, beer, and corn-brandy was heartily enjoyed, hymns were sung, and, to the music of a mounted fiddler, the wedding procession started for church. The knot was tied, the procession returned, more banqueting took place, the gifts were given or promised, the dancing was danced, more hymns were sung, the bridegroom put the matron's coif on his wife's head, and she pulled the husband's nightcap down upon his ears.

Scarcely, however, had the dancing recommenced when a horrid howl was heard, and every one exclaimed, "The Demon Wolf!" That howl sadly damped the merriment of the subsequent festivities, and proved indeed, of ill omen.

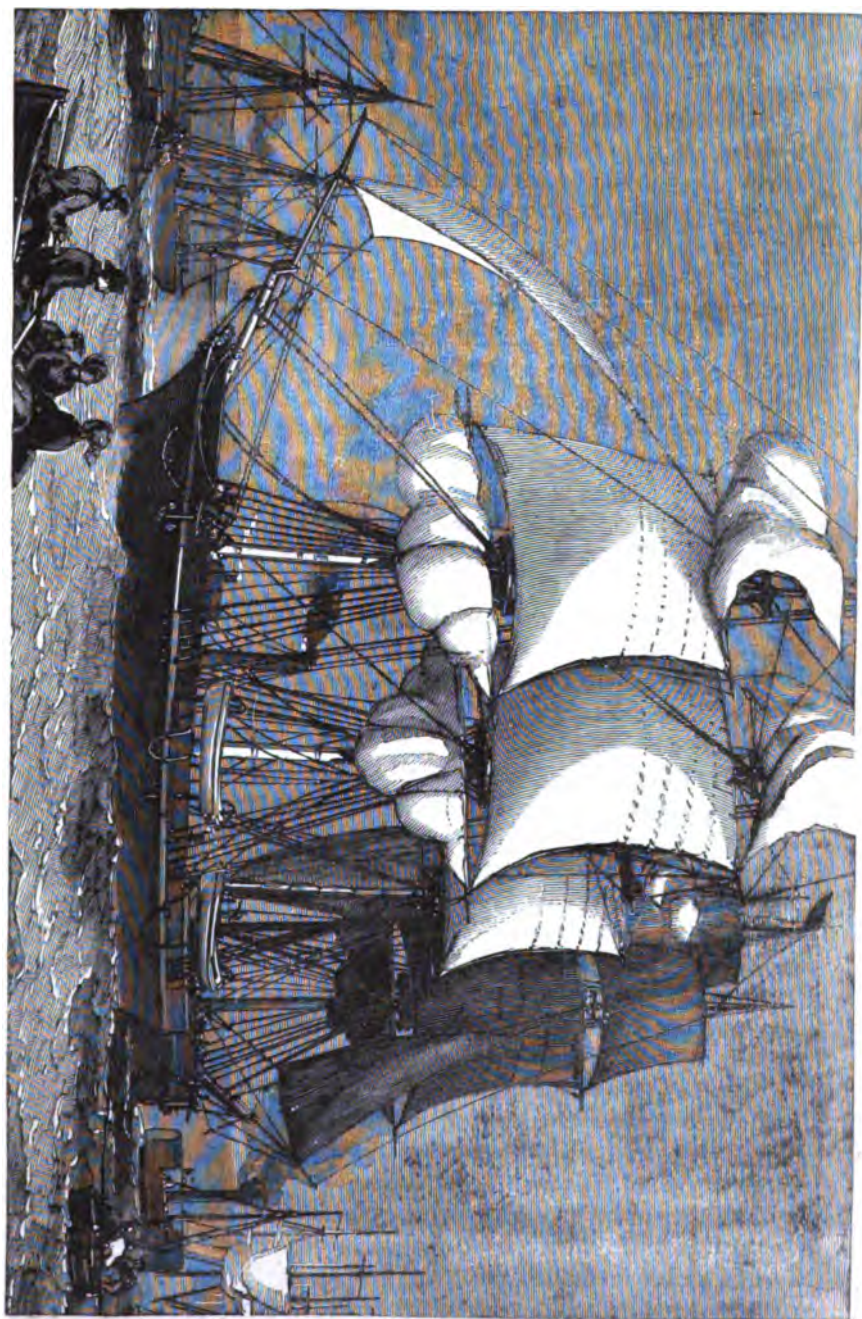
The Demon Wolf carried off Kari's first-born and only child.

She died insane, and his neighbours, although they pitied him from the bottom of their hearts, thought that Oddo must be as mad, when afterwards, he gave himself up almost entirely to the chase of the wrecker of his happiness. For weeks he pursued the wolf, scarcely giving himself time to eat. At last he hit it, the wolf rolled over with a smothered snarl, but exhausted Oddo fell dead at the same time.



AMONG THE WHALES.

THE whale, as all my readers are aware, is poetically called the "leviathan of the deep," and is the largest beast known in the animal world. The whales of Greenland become the prey of man at certain seasons of the year, when the ice-bound regions which they inhabit prove accessible to our ships. It requires men with strong nerves and much power of endurance to capture these gigantic inhabitants of the great deep, and the vessels employed in the whale fishery, as may be seen from the illustration (page 196), are, if not very large, built so as to insure great strength and power of resistance, for they are not only liable



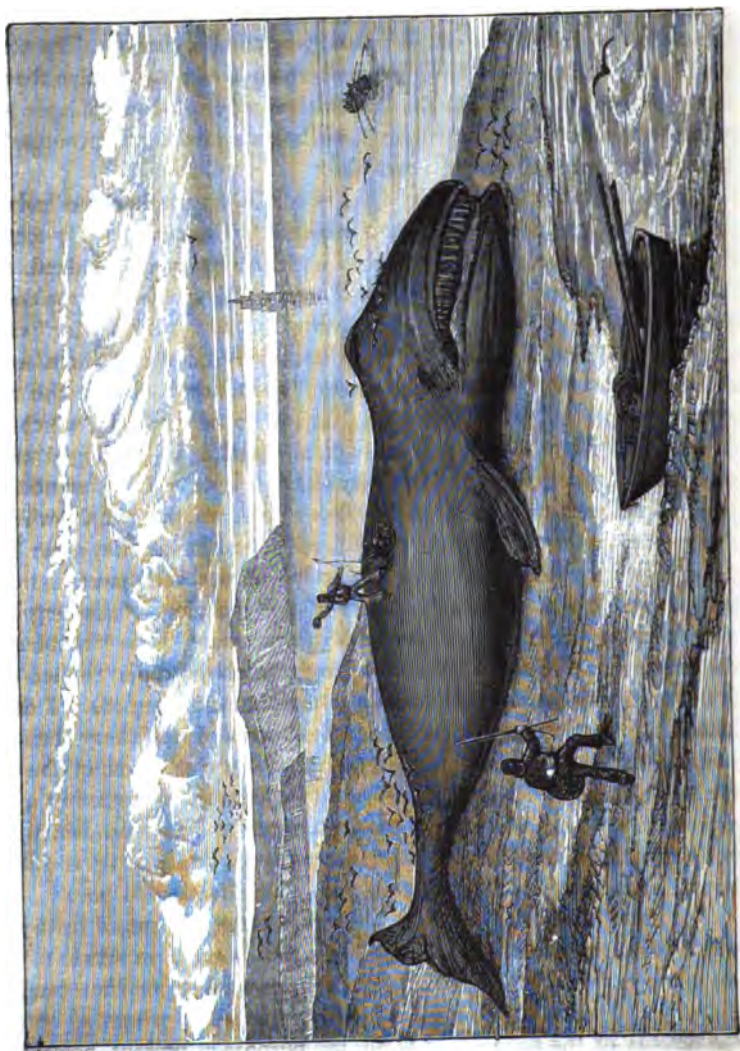
to be struck by whales, but are often subjected to even greater dangers by being embedded among gigantic masses of ice, powerful enough to crush into atoms the largest and strongest ship ever built, just as if it was made of pasteboard or lathwood ; and many a time such a catastrophe has occurred in the frozen seas of the high North.

The whales belong to the order of animals known to naturalists as cetaceans or cetacea, but at present I shall only deal with two of the order, taking them as typical members of the whole : the two I select are those which are best known to commerce—namely the cachalot, or spermaceti whale, and the Greenland, or “right whale.” This latter animal, great and powerful as it undoubtedly is, was at one period endowed by the ignorant or half-informed with attributes of size and strength which have been found either to be entirely fabulous or greatly exaggerated. We are indebted to that intrepid whale-fisher, Dr. Scoresby, for much of the accurate information we now possess as to the dimensions and habits of the Greenland whale. That gentleman, as a practical whaler, is entitled to speak with authority on the subject, as he personally assisted at the capture of no less than 322 of these gigantic animals ; but instead of any of them being over 150 feet in length, as was at one time asserted, not one of them exceeded fifty-eight feet, or a third of the size given by imaginative people who had described the animals without having seen them ! The largest specimen which Dr. Scoresby knows to have been captured and carefully measured, was sixty-seven feet long. The bulkiest part of the whale is immediately behind its head, and at that place the circumference of the body is about thirty-five feet. The head of the animal is of great magnitude, about equal to a third part of its total bulk. The tail of a whale is its chief weapon of offence and defence ; it is about twenty-five feet broad, crescent-shaped, and of immense power : with one blow of its tail the leviathan of the deep has been known to *smash* a strong whale-boat into splinters and kill some of the crew. Although the whale is popularly called a fish, it is a warm-blooded animal, and suckles its progeny just as if it were a cow. The mother whale is of a most affectionate disposition and will never desert her young, which is of advantage to the whale-fishers, who, if they can kill the calf, are quite sure to capture the cow. The interior of a Greenland whale's mouth is what I may call a wonderful piece of machinery—it is furnished with an apparatus of “baleen” or whalebone, which acts as its food-catcher, seeing that it retains all the animal and vegetable substances which the animal can find as it roams its ocean home ; the water, straining through

the masses of "baleen," being permitted to escape. Wonderful as is the size of the Greenland whale's head, and curious as is its internal structure, its gullet is very small—not more than an inch and a half in diameter, so that it can only swallow very small animals. The tongue and "head matter" of the Greenland whale is of greater value than the body blubber. It is thought that whales attain to a great age; some naturalists assert that specimens have been captured which must have been near upon a thousand years old!

The cachalot, or sperm whale, is, as a rule, larger than the leviathan of the Greenland seas, and sometimes attains a length of eighty feet, the head of the animal being of enormous size, pretty nearly, indeed, equal to half of the entire body, while the throat of this species is large enough to allow of its swallowing a human being! The "head matter" of the cachalot is of still more value than that of the Greenland whale, as it is full of a substance which is known as "spermaceti" (hence the name spermaceti whale), which, on being drained of the oil with which it is mixed, is used for the manufacture of candles and in the making of various ointments. As many as ten large barrels of this valuable substance have been found in the "case" or head-piece of one animal; but the whole of the spermaceti contained in a whale is not found in the *case*, some being also found in various cavities of the body—so that spermaceti is not, as was at one time supposed, the brain of the cachalot. "Ambergris," a very valuable substance, is also found in this whale. The "blubber" of the sperm whale, that is, the portion from which the oil is "boiled out," is not so thick as it is on the right whale of the Arctic regions. I do not intend to say anything further about the sperm whale-fishery than this, namely, that the ships which go in search of these monsters of the deep are so fashioned and provisioned as to be capable of enduring a long cruise in the Southern seas. They frequently call at some island, and boil down the blubber in order to extract the oil, or they "try it out" on board, being provided with furnace and boilers for the purpose.

The chief historical interest of the whale-fishery is centred in the pursuit of the Greenland whale, the oil of which became an article of commerce so early as the ninth century. Whales were at one time caught in the Bay of Biscay, but the supply was very speedily exhausted through the activity of the fishers. It is not my purpose at present, however, to trace out minutely the history of this peculiar industry, as a full retrospect would take up too much of our space: a few particulars will serve us. Although the English, at a very early period, took an active part in



the industry of whale-fishing; they were excelled in the latter half of the seventeenth century by the Dutch, who pursued the whale with such perseverance and success as to be able to supply Europe with the greater portion of its oil. At one time (1680) they had a fleet of 260 large vessels and 14,000 persons employed in the whale-fishery. Fifty years after that period Britain began to encourage whale-fishing by paying what was called a "bounty"—that is, Government gave a sum of money equal to thirty shillings a ton on every ship of 200 tons or upwards, fitted out for the fishery, which sum was ultimately raised to two pounds a ton. But this plan did not in the end succeed, as it was found that many unscrupulous persons fitted up vessels, not to catch whales, but to obtain the bounty. Political troubles having compelled the industrious Dutch people to abandon whale-fishing, the British then entered upon the work with far greater vigour than they displayed during the period in which the bounties were given. Between the years 1781 and 1795, the bounties paid were gradually reduced, but, despite of that fact, whale-fishing was found so remunerative as to tempt adventurers to fit out ships without regard to any Government donation. Still, Britain never had so many vessels engaged in the whale-fishery as the Netherlands. In the year 1815, when whaling enterprise had greatly extended, there were only 164 ships engaged in it, sailing from British ports. From 1795, at which period the bounty had almost ceased, to 1830, the whale-fishery, as carried on by British ships, proved very remunerative; as much as 20,000 tuns of oil being brought home in one season. Since the year 1830, whale-fishing as a British enterprise has very much fallen off, and now there are not more than a dozen or fifteen ships sailing to the Arctic seas in pursuit of the whale. In America, whale-fishing was once an enterprise of great moment, largely engaged in by the New Englanders. Massachusetts alone had at one time, in the latter end of last century, a fleet of 304 whalers, one-half of which fished the Northern, and the other half the Southern seas. It was not, however, till the beginning of the eighteenth century (1712) that the sperm whale-fishery commenced, when one Christopher Hussey, of Nantucket, master of a whale-ship, fell in with a mighty cachalot and quickly made it his prey. Since then the sperm whale-fishery has chiefly remained, despite the efforts of the French and a brief trial on the part of the British, in the hands of the American whalers. At one period, as many as ninety English ships sailed the Southern seas in search of the cachalot, and it is worthy of record; that the *Siren*, a British South-Sea whaler, after a cruise of thirty-two months

in the Pacific Ocean, came safely home with a cargo consisting of 356 tuns of sperm oil and spermaceti.

I daresay my younger readers will feel rather wearied with these dry statistics, but I shall now endeavour to interest them by describing, as well as I can, the process of whale-hunting in the icy regions of the far north. As they will see from the fine picture of a Dundee whaler on page 193, the ships engaged in the whale fishery are propelled by steam power, but for all that, they do not discard the occasional aid of their sails. It is about five and twenty years since the power of steam was first applied to a whale-ship in Scotland. It was called the *Tay*, and was a full-rigged ship of 600 tons register. By means of that vessel it was speedily found out that the power of steam was of great use to those engaged in whaling. Now all whaling-ships are more or less propelled by the aid of powerful steam engines, so that they may be able to go and return from the scenes of their labour with greater speed than formerly was attainable, and also to push into regions which, without the aid of steam power, would have been inaccessible. At one time Peterhead used to be the chief rendezvous for the Scottish whaling fleet, but now the energetic people of the rising town of Dundee have nearly the whole of the oil trade in their own hands.

As a general rule, a whaling-ship is the property of one or two, or, it may be, a score of individuals, each subscribing his share of the amount of money required for the building and fitting out of the vessel, with the necessary boats and other whaling gear, all of which are more or less costly. The ship has also to be liberally provisioned, as she carries a numerous crew, who must, for the sake of health, be well fed during their period of hard work and exposure. The profits of the venture, when profits are obtained, which, however, is not from every voyage, are of course divided among the proprietors, after the captain and men have been paid their share, as it is the rule for the crew to be paid mostly according to the success of the enterprise. Some of the oil-ships of Dundee make two voyages to the ice every year. The first, early in the season, is undertaken to obtain a cargo of seals, from which a valuable oil is obtained; the second voyage begins about the middle or end of May, and is prosecuted for the purpose of killing the whales and obtaining their blubber and whalebone.

After having taken in a store of provisions sufficient for about fifteen months—not that the voyage lasts half so long, but a large quantity of food inspires the crew with confidence in the dread of accidents or mis-

adventure—the whaler leaves Dundee for Shetland, where she receives on board the remainder, indeed the greater part of her crew, and possibly some portion of her stores. No time is lost, as it is of the utmost importance to reach the whaling-ground as soon as possible. The ice is soon reached, first of all in little broken fragments, then in larger pieces. The cold is somewhat intense, and the weather is frequently very foggy, so that it is impossible to see for more than a short distance ahead, and “fishing” at such a time is out of the question. I need not say anything here about the geography of the whale-fishing regions; I shall give my readers the credit of having read all about the Arctic seas and the icy desolation of distant Greenland and Davis’ Straits, now the scene of most of the whale-fishing which is carried on. I will suppose, then, that we are aboard of a Dundee whaler, and that we are all anxiety to find a fish. An officer, very often the captain himself, is away up aloft, near the top of one of the masts, in a little erection called the “crow’s-nest,” looking out far and wide, by the aid of a powerful glass, for his prey. All the men are at their posts, eager to hear the welcome sound that will proclaim a fish to be in sight. Whenever the signal is given the boats are lowered, and the men start at once in pursuit of the animal; indeed, with some ships it is the rule to keep one boat on the trail, ready manned, so that time, which is very precious, may be saved. This boat is called the “bran-boat,” and, having the advantage of being already in the water with all its gear ready for use, it ought to be able to reach the whale before any of the other boats. The whale is sometimes a long way distant from the ship, and is often difficult to reach, because of the fields of loose ice that may be in the way. To be the first to thrust a harpoon into the animal is an object of ambition with the crews of the various boats, and a scene of great excitement frequently ensues as the boats begin to approach the animal, each crew striving to beat the other. As soon as the first boat arrives, the harpooner stands up and hurls his iron at the fish with deadly force. It enters and holds! Then the boat is “backed” with all the strength which the crew can bring to bear upon their oars, so that it may be out of all danger of being struck by the animal as it instinctively takes its headlong dive into the depths of the ocean. When the boat is “fast” to the fish—that is, when it has been ascertained that the harpoon has taken hold—the fact is announced by the hoisting of a small flag at the stern of the boat, which, on being seen by those on board the ship, produces quite an excitement. As may readily be supposed, a great deal has to be accomplished before

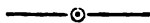
a whale is killed and placed alongside the ship to be cut in. The harpoon is fastened to a long line of strong rope, and as the whale descends into the depths of the sea, after being struck, the line is run out with great velocity, water having to be plentifully dashed upon the part of the boat over which it is carried to prevent its taking fire. Sometimes the line carried by one boat is not of sufficient length, and in such a case the rope belonging to another boat requires to be attached. The fish may remain under the water for a period of sixteen or twenty minutes. Meanwhile all the boats are waiting the advent of the animal, the harpooner of each ready to dash his instrument into its flesh. Another iron is successfully fixed, and another boat floats its flag in token of being "fast." And yet another harpoon may be necessary before the huge animal is conquered. But at last, exhausted from loss of strength and by waste of blood, the whale gives token of defeat; it is then that the *coup-de-grâce* is given by the thrusting into its body of two or three lances, which effectually complete the work of destruction. Some "kills," when the fish dies "game," are far more exciting than others, and sometimes occupy many hours, and require the aid of nearly every man in the ship. As soon as the animal is dead, the men set to work and make preparations for towing it toward the vessel. This is sometimes very hard work indeed, if the slaughter of the animal has taken place at any considerable distance; but in some cases the vessel is able now, by means of its steam power, to come quite near the scene of capture, which saves the various boats' crews a great deal of time and weary work. The "kreg," as the carcass of the whale is called, is carefully fastened to the ship in case of accidents, as a dead whale has been known to sink in a moment out of reach, and the "speckshoneer" at once commences, along with those under him, the work of "cutting in," which is very laborious while it lasts. The blubber is cut off the whale by means of sharp spades, and is hoisted into the ship by the aid of ropes and tackle, in great junks, each of which will weigh six or eight hundredweight, or even half a ton. The "kings of the blubber" and the "skee man" receive the pieces, divide them into two or three lumps, and stow them away in the "flensgut," to lie till there is time to cut them into smaller portions containing blubber only. The blubber of the Greenland whale, the voyage only lasting a few months, is usually brought home to be boiled down in the boiling-yards. The operation of "cutting in," as it is called, is very often attended with danger: the men, although they wear shoes containing long spikes, often fall off the animal while at work, and land among the sharks which assem-

ble on such occasions to feed on the fragments of the mighty but now harmless monster of the sea.

The rough drawing of a Greenland whale on page 196 will convey to my young readers a good idea of the size and power of that gigantic animal which

"on the deep,
Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land."

I shall now very briefly allude to some of the dangers attendant on the fishery. It is seldom that a year elapses without a tale of woe coming from the ice. Scarce a season passes in which one or two whalers are not wrecked, or "crunched up" in the ice, perhaps, and never heard of more. Only a few years ago we were all thrilled with the story of the *Diana* of Hull, which sailed into Lerwick from the cold regions of the icy North, with her captain dead, and nine of her crew done to death with scurvy or starvation, laid out stark and grim beside him. After that there came to us the story of the *Princess Charlotte*, a ship which, while running between two floes, was so suddenly crushed by the ice that the crew had barely time to escape with their lives. Before the quickest tongue could count ten the ship had been nipt in an icy embrace reduced in a moment or two to a mass of splintered wood, a wreck in its most awful form. The loss of individual lives is also frequent: an unfortunate seaman aloft among the rigging benumbed with cold loses his grip, and, falling into the ravening water, is lost for ever. At another time a boat's crew, miles away from their ship, become enveloped in a dense fog, and never see their wooden home again, their boat, alas! becoming their coffin. I need not, however, prolong these painful records, for it is wonderful, after all, not that so many accidents and misadventures occur among the whalers, but that there are so few.



THE WOUNDED SIKH; OR, TRUE TO HIS SALT.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE INDIAN MUTINY.

YES, sir, I know that's the way people talk of them, and I'm very sorry for it—calling them "confounded niggers," and saying that they're an inferior race by nature, and inferior they must remain. Now,

I don't think so myself. It's my opinion that you can get a great deal of good out of the native breed, if you only go the right way to work with them, and that what we have to do now is, not to govern India, but to teach India to govern itself. And as for the "confounded nigger" theory, why, I'll just tell you a story, and you shall judge for yourself.

It was about four years before the Mutiny that I first went out—and, like most other "Griffins," I had some very queer ideas about what India was like, founded partly on the pantomime of "Bluebeard," and partly on the illustrations to "Lalla Rookh." I had pictured to myself a sort of fairyland, where it never snowed, or rained, or did anything disagreeable; full of tiger-hunting and pig-sticking, and tropical birds and flowers, and gardens like what you see on the lids of *bonbon*-boxes, all marble stairs and water-lilies; and mighty cities, consisting chiefly of white marble palaces on the pattern of the cathedral at Milan, with dark eyes looking down from impossible balconies, and helmeted chiefs in shawls of the "loudest" pattern, swaggering up and down unnecessary stairs; and gorgeous processions, with any amount of peacocks' feathers, and black slaves, and richly-harnessed elephants, passing in front of them all day long.

But the reality was very different. When I first landed at Kurrachee, I found myself half choked with dust, under a leaden sky, and with the evenings rather chilly than otherwise—for I had forgotten that, even in India, the sun does not usually shine at night. And before I had been a month in this promised land, what with mosquitoes, and scorpions, and dust, and prickly heat, and native servants, and morning parade, and other afflictions, I can promise you I wished myself home again a dozen times a day; but when once you begin a thing, you've got to go through with it.

Well, sir, when I had been in the country about a year, I was passing through the bazaar at Suttee-pore one day—though not to look at it, I can assure you, for the bazaar delusion had been exploded with me long before. My idea of an Indian bazaar had been, of course, a combination of Westminster Abbey and the Burlington Arcade, with gorgeous dresses flitting to and fro, and "the costly merchandise of the East," such as one reads about in Marco Polo or the Arabian Nights, lying about in every direction. The *real* thing I found to be a long, dark, filthy lane, so narrow that a man on horseback could hardly pass in some places without grazing the bamboo thatches that stuck out on either side; and underneath them were little kennels, almost pitch-dark, in which long,

skinny black scarecrows were cooking all sorts of horrid messes in little copper stewpans, or lying fast asleep with the flies swarming over them from head to foot ; and naked children, paunchy as any football, rolling in the dirt along with huge unwieldy pigs ; and countless other abominations besides, one worse than another. In fact, the song that Rattler of "ours" made upon one of these slums did them no more than justice, upon my word.

"Sing a song of nasty scents,
A lane that's never dry ;
Four-and-twenty black men
Huddled in a sty !

"When the sty was opened,
The stench went near and far ;
Wasn't that a pretty place
To christen 'a bazaar'?"

Well, sir, as I said just now, I was passing through one of these nice places one afternoon—and not loitering on the road more than I could help, I can assure you—when, all at once, I heard a great screaming and uproar, as if there were a row going on somewhere. And, sure enough, when I turned the corner, what should I see but a man with his back against a wall (he seemed to be a Sikh by his dress and the cut of his jib) fighting, tooth and nail, with a long dagger, against a whole crowd of fellows who were letting drive at him with clubs and big knives, while others were shying potsherds and lumps of hard clay at him over the shoulders of the foremost ?

This was a new sight to me, for, as a rule, one Sikh is quite enough to chase a score of these fellows ; but whatever he might have been doing, I wasn't going to see one man set upon by two or three dozen ; so I blew out in one breath all the Hindostanee slang I knew (which wasn't much) and went in among 'em like a cannon-ball.

My advent put an end to the shindy at once ; for the sight of an English *Sahib* in a passion—especially if he happens to have the Queen's uniform on—is generally quite enough to scatter an Indian mob ; and a good knock-down blow to one fellow who seemed inclined to be bump-tious, heightened the effect of my dramatic *entrée* so successfully, that in less than a minute I found myself alone with my new friend.

He had got more than one rather nasty cut, and was bleeding pretty freely ; but he stood up as straight as a pillar when I spoke to him and put my hand to his forehead and breast, and thanked me in such a gallant, manly way, that it made my heart warm to him at once, upon



my word ! Moreover, it happened that, just at that time, I had lost one of my servants, and didn't know where on earth to get another ; so I asked this fellow if *he* would take the place, and he agreed at once. Some of our mess chaffed me about it a bit, just at first ; but when they saw how handily he took to his work, they soon shut up.

Well, the summer of '57 came, and the Mutiny broke out. I'm not going to drag you through it all again, for you must know it pretty well by this time ; and besides, I can tell you that we who actually *saw* what things went on at that time, are not so very fond of talking about them—indeed, I don't know who *could* be. I spent a whole evening, once, with Mowbray Thomson (the man who escaped from Cawnpore with Lafosse, you know), and he never mentioned the word "India" once all the time—and I don't wonder at it either.

However, through all the fighting that we had, from first to last, my Sikh (his name was Ghounem, by-the-bye) stuck by me as true as steel, and saved my life more than once. I remember once, when we were crossing the Jumna in the teeth of a pretty hot fire from the Pandies, a shot smashed the boat I was in, and I should have gone down like a stone (for I'd been stunned by a splinter striking me on the head), when Ghounem, who could swim as well as he could do everything else, came to the rescue, and fished me out.

Well, at last a detachment of us were sent to surprise a lot of the Pandies who had camped up the river, not very far from Delhi ; and we caught them napping just before daybreak, and gave them a glorious licking. But in the heat of the scrimmage, a few of us got parted from the rest ; and all at once I caught sight of Elliot of ours on the ground, struggling with a fellow who was trying to spear him, while two more were running up to finish him with their swords.

Luckily I had still two barrels of my revolver loaded, or I should have come too late to help poor old Dick. I roared out, "Stick to it, Dick !" and slapped off both barrels, bringing down a man with each shot, and then I whipped out my sabre like lightning, and rushed at No. 3.

Just then another of the rascals made a cut at me from behind. Elliot saw it, and cried out, but too late to save me ; and I should have been killed to a certainty had not Ghounem rushed forward, caught the blade *in his open left hand*, wrenched the fellow's sword from him with the other, and cut him down. Then he fell himself, fainting with loss of blood.

"My poor fellow !" cried I, running to pick him up ; "I'd sooner have given all I'm worth than this should have happened !"

"Never mind, Sahib," said the brave fellow, setting his teeth to keep down a groan; "if I die, remember that I've been *true to my salt!*"

However, I'm glad to say he did not die, after all; and though he *has* only one hand, he's a better servant than many men with two. When he brings in dinner you shall judge for yourself.



JEM'S YARN.

"PUMP sucks, sir—you've run me pretty nigh dry," said Jem, name with unfair opprobrium, the Jawer. "No, 't ain't grog I'm thinking of, but yarns," he added, with a grin. His yarns had wiled away many an hour that otherwise would have been very wearisome on ship-board, and it was not pleasant news to hear that they were drawing to a close. Jem, who had been doctoring his pipe, put the tin cover on the bowl again, and puffed away for a minute or two in silence. Then, to my great delight, he began as follows:—

"Well, look 'ee here, sir, I can't think o' no more adventurs o' my own to tell 'ee, but I'll tell 'ee one o' my old grandad's stories. It was them as made a sailor of me. Grandad sailed round the world wi' Admiral Byron, in the *Dolphin*. That was thought a deal of in them days, though I've sailed round the world pretty nigh a dozen times myself, and don't see as it's anything so wery remarkable. The *Dolphin* was a twenty-four-gun ship, and the *Tamar* sloop, that sailed with her, carried sixteen. The *Dolphin* took the ground coming down Channel, so she'd to go into dock at Plymouth, but she'd come to no harm. Grandad got two months' pay at Plymouth, and he bought grandmother a necklace and sent it by the coach. They weren't married then. The old gal was wery proud o' that necklace: I've seen it many a time when I was a little 'un."—"Ay, ay, sir," Jem here shouted, in acknowledgment of an order from the officer of the watch. Jem's yarns were often thus interrupted, but I need not further indicate the breaks.

"First place they put in at was Madeiry, for water, and wine, and vegetables, and fresh meat. That's just one o' the places I never happened to sail to. An uncommon nice place it must be, I should say, accordin' to what grandad used to tell us. Spring and summer like all

the year round, and no end o' fruit, and the sugar smells like wi'lets. At the Cape de Werds, too, they had to put in agin for water—at St. Jago. The folks there are 'cuter now than they used to be. The niggers were so hard up for clothes in grandad's time, that they'd sell turkeys enough to last a boat's crew for a week, for a pair o' ragged old breeches. Rio, too, they touched at to git greens, for the scurvy 'ad broke out. Lord Clive was there in a Injieman, and he came aboard the commodore's ship, and the yards were manned—just as it is now, for the bigwigs. Slaves was sold in the market there then—trotted out jest like horses. A wonderful religious place Rio was then—in the way o' crossin' yerself and goin' down on yer marrer-bones, and a wonderful rascally place it were, too; and it ain't much different now-a-days. Nice games I've seen at Rio. The crimps got hold o' some of grandad's shipmates and made 'em drunk—hocussed 'em and hid 'em. Some was got aboard agin that were *Tamar*, but them from the *Dolphin* had to be left behind. Lord Clive wanted to go on to the East Injies in the *Dolphin*, but the commodore wouldn't ship him. He made believe as he'd take him aboard at the Cape, but it wasn't the Cape the knowin' old man was bound for. When they'd got out to sea agin, a signal was run up for the captain o' the *Tamar* to come aboard the *Dolphin*, and then the men, and for that matter, the officers jest the same, got to know, for the first time, as they was goin' on a woyage o' diskivery in the South Seas. The men was willin' enough, for they was promised double wages—them as behaved theirselves. They was soon grumblin' though, when it got cold, for they'd sold their warm togs at Madeiry and Rio. They'd some rough weather 'bout that time. The *Dolphin* was pretty nigh capsized, and the men were precious scared when they see the water all turned into blood. *That* was what they *thought*, but it was only little crayfish. Bucketfuls of 'em they hauled up. Off Patagonie the *Dolphin* run aground, but she was got off. The long-boat, that had been helpin', was carried out to sea with only grandad and another hand in her. It's a miracle how they got her back, for they'd nothin' to eat nor drink, and were jest stiff with the cold. When the ships was got moored in a harbour they call Port Desire, shootin' parties used to go ashore. There was seals! Grandad's 'baccy-pouch was made out o' the skin o' one he shot there, and the young 'uns they used to eat. And there was the guanicoes—summut between a camel and a sheep; and there was a sort of a ostrich as laid eggs as big as pumpkins; and penguins as barked like a pack o' hounds and brayed like a reg'ment o' donkeys; and hares as big as lambs, and wild ducks.



Birds were so plenty that they knocked 'em down right and left with sticks, and there was places where they couldn't walk without crunching no end o' eggs. What with one thing and another, they lived like fightin' cocks in Patagonie. Grandad used to say that the young guanicoes was as good as weal. When they were in sight o' Terra del Fuego, they see a lot o' savages ridin' back'ards and for'ards a-horseback—on the Patagonie shore, you understand. So the boats was got out, and the commodore—he worn't admiral then—went ashore, and there there was hundreds o' big-headed giants. My grandad worn't a little man, but he used to say that he'd got to go on tiptoe, and then give a good strain, to git his hand on the shoulders o' one o' them Patagonie fellers. And the women was big to match, and some o' the boys 'ood ha' made good-sized Englishmen. Some was standin' on the beach, and some was cuttin' about a-horseback, and then they squatted theirselves down, and began psalm-singin' like, and the commodore give 'em beads and such. And then the beggars wanted 'baccy, and that was give 'em, too. Then they pointed to the smoke o' some fires as was burnin' a good bit off, and to their months, as if they was inwitin' our chaps to dinner, and when the commodore shook his head and walked off, they began to howl. They'd got dogs summut like foxes, and the women rode crosslegs as well as the men. There was one o' the officers over six foot high, but he was nothin' alongside them Patagonie giants; and when they patted him on the shoulder, jest as if they were pleased with a fine little boy, they pretty nigh broke his collar-bone. There was other natives they come across not so big, as wore hens' skins, with the feathers on for hats. They landed at a place called Port Famine, because some Spanish chaps managed to get starved to death there; but 't was summer-time, though 't was Christmas, when grandad was there, and he used to say it was as fine a place as ever he see. Big shady trees, and a beautiful river, and all sorts o' flowers, and birds, and wild wegetables, such as salary, good for the scurvy, and no end o' geese and ducks, and plenty o' fish. They come across some o' the natives' huts—some as had the fires burnin'; but they didn't see no natives. Only once when they'd lighted a fire, they see another lighted direc'ly t' other side o' the water, as if the natives was telegraphin' like. But there goes eight bells, and I'm jolly glad: I'll tell you some more another time, sir. I shall sleep without rockin', for I can scarce keep my eyes open. I shall tumble in all standin'. Good night, sir."

MR. HIGHCLIFF HOPPER IN SWITZERLAND.

MR. HIGHCLIFF HOPPER prided himself very much on the fact that he was a born mountaineer. Most people are born *some things*. There are born artists and born musicians, born poets and born actors.

Some people pride themselves upon being born aristocrats, with an endless line of ancestors, while other people are equally proud of being born plebeians, and having had no ancestors at all to speak of. A born this or a born that,—a born lady or a born gentleman,—people plume themselves upon being; just as though it was something to their own credit, and as though they had been asked beforehand what sort of a creature they would choose to be when they were sent into the world. Instead of which, the fact is, that we, all of us, wake up one fine day, to find ourselves in the world, popped down into some little niche that just fits us, and would fit nobody else; but how or why we were put there, or why we should have been ourselves, and not somebody else, we can't imagine. The more we think about it, the more puzzled we get; only the more we think, the more certain we feel that pride in the matter is altogether a mistake, since, if we had been born beggars, or born vagabonds, or born idiots, we couldn't have helped it. At the same time, people will go on making mistakes to the world's end, and so they will go on priding themselves about one thing and another which is not the least bit of credit to them.

The place of Mr. Highcliff Hopper's birth was a small flint-stone, green-shuttered building, situated on the top of Margate Cliff, and known as Highcliff Cottage.

At the time, Mr. and Mrs. Hopper, respectable London tradespeople, happened to be taking a fortnight's holiday among the yellow slippers and shell gardens of that delightful spot, and there, somewhat, it must be confessed, to the surprise and annoyance of every one concerned, the little baby-boy was born, for they had not wanted him quite so soon.

However, when he did come, they made the best of him. His papa and mamma thought him the loveliest baby that ever was seen, though he really was very far from being that, and said, "Welcome, little stranger," and all sorts of polite things, to him, and watched over him for many

months with the tenderest anxiety, for fear he should go away from them as suddenly as he had come.

Thanks to their loving care, he did not ; but thrived and grew into a strong, hearty, fat boy ; and, as years went on, into a hearty, stout, perhaps even rather too stout, man.

So this was the way in which Mr. Highcliff Hopper became a born mountaineer instead of a born Shoreditchian—a Cockney. And Mr. Highcliff Hopper was especially pleased with that fact. It is a remarkable thing about English people that they don't feel much pride at being born Cockneys—Londoners, that is—they like rather to have *come from* somewhere—from Gloucestershire or Devonshire, or "the North." A Frenchman takes infinite pride in being a Parisian, but a Londoner seldom boasts of being a born Londoner. And yet, to be a true child of the greatest city in the world, to have had the tramp of mighty millions for a lullaby, to have been nursed at the great throbbing heart of civilization, seems a thing on which a man might feel pride less foolishly than on many things of which we are vainglorious. But there is no accounting for people's prides and vanities.

Mr. Highcliff Hopper took his name from the place of his birth—Highcliff Cottage. When his papa and mamma had talked the matter of their baby's name over together, they could think of nothing more appropriate or prettier. Mr. Hopper *père* had certainly made other suggestions, and for a long time held out for Highcliff Margate Hopper. But Mrs. Hopper had pronounced against Margate, and she had her way in the end, as ladies always do, or should do.

Mr. Highcliff Hopper was very grateful in this matter of his name. He always felt that his father and mother had shown a great amount of good taste and discrimination in choosing for him so elegant and suggestive an appellation. He was always very glad that that other name of Margate had not been added, as he felt it would have spoiled the effect. But for a long time he was not quite sure whether, seeing that he was born within sight of the sea, he ought not to consider himself a born sailor. This doubt lasted up to a period when Mr. Highcliff Hopper made his first voyage across the Channel from Dover to Boulogne. It happened to be a fine *breezy* day, and from the sensations that Mr. Hopper experienced on the occasion, and the agonies that he suffered, he felt convinced from that moment that, whatever else he might have been born, he was not a born sailor. Still, nothing could prevent him from being Highcliff Hopper, the born mountaineer, nor deter him

from taking that tour into Switzerland with which he had so long promised to treat himself.

Mr. Hopper was bent upon the delights of foreign travel. So what was there to prevent him now from proceeding merrily on his way? he asked himself, when, after two or three days' rest, he felt a little recovered from the irritating effects of his sea-voyage. There was nothing now but pleasure to come, said he, feeling once more able to take his customary cheerful view of life.

He passed hurriedly through France, stayed only a couple of hot, fatiguing, bewildering days in Paris, and pressed onwards. Cities and palaces might satisfy other minds of a less romantic turn. The mountains were his goal.

Once, when he had been a very young man, he had learned a duet with a pretty young cousin (since married), "We come to thee, Savoy," and Mr. Highcliff Hopper spent some hours of each day during the first week of his Continental tour in trying to remember the tune of that unhappy piece of music. He had a notion that if he could only *get it to come*, it would sound so very nice among the mountains. After all his exertions, however, he could never get any farther than the first three bars.

Mr. Highcliff Hopper felt a proud and happy man when he left the land of France behind him, and was able to say—looking out of the railway carriage as well as he could, across two other gentlemen, who were smoking placidly—"I am in Switzerland—the land of mountains, of freedom, and of William Tell."

Mr. Highcliff Hopper turned his back with no regret upon France. In the first place he had, as he was accustomed to say in his frank English style, "no opinion of the French, neither of their ways, nor of their goings on." In the second place he had felt very much affronted by the obstinacy with which the French had, as a nation, refused to comprehend him when he addressed them, even when he spoke to them in their own language, which he had carefully learned when he was a small boy at school. Mr. Highcliff Hopper could not but think that they had made a practice of wilfully misunderstanding him. In Switzerland he felt sure that he should be more at home—not only from the neighbourhood of the mountains, but also because he believed that an immense deal of sympathy existed between himself and the Swiss character. Was not a free-born Briton the natural friend and ally of the free-born Swiss? he would say, as he clasped his hands beneath the tails of his coat, like the John Bull that he was.

"Aire you thinking of doing Mont Blanc, sir?" he was asked by an opposite neighbour, in the course of his first dinner eaten on Swiss soil. The gentleman who addressed him, a lean yellow-faced man, pronounced the words as though they had been written *Mount Blank*.

"Well, really I don't know," returned our friend, anxious not to compromise himself; "but," pulling himself up rather proudly, "I think I probably shall."

"Guess you're good at climbing?" inquired the first speaker.

Mr. Highcliff Hopper smiled benignantly around him.

"I have not had much practice of late years," he said, modestly, "but the fact is, I am a born mountaineer, as my name implies—I am Highcliff Hopper, at your service."

"Member of the Alpine Club?" asked a broad grey-jacketed young Scotchman, with a funny little twinkle in his eyes, who sat beside him.

The American gentleman opposite did not give Mr. Highcliff time for a reply. He broke in—

"Guess you wouldn't find much satisfaction in climbing these hills" (smothered laughter from the grey-coated Scotchman; American goes on)—"that is, if you aire a climber, sir. I've walked over a good many mountains in my time, but of all the impositions that have been put upon me in Europe, I consider these Swiss hills the worst. To think that I should have traversed the mighty ocean just to see nothing half so good as I might have contemplated at any moment out of my own back parlour window. Sir, it is discouraging. If you want to see a mountain, I would ask you just to step across to *Amerri-cur*."

"Dear me!" observed Mr. Highcliff, "you surprise me."

"I should say, sir, that this is not the first occasion on which you have been surprised, and I guess it is very likely the fact may recur in the course of your existence. But if you desire to be surprised quite out of the common way, I would advise you just to step over to *Amerri-cur*. I expect that we've several things there that might surprise you—rather."

"Ah! it's very possible, no doubt," said Mr. Highcliff, quite depressed, thinking he'd after all come to the wrong place. "And as for the Swiss mountains, then, you consider them——"

"Immense shams, sir—stupendous impositions, sir,—just nothing more nor less than poor imitations of our *Amerri-cur* ranges."

"Not hard to climb, eh?" asked Mr. Highcliff, with a hopeful smile

"Hard, sir! there isn't one of them that I couldn't just walk up and down before breakfast on a morning—that is, if I felt disposed to."

It must be confessed that Mr. Highcliff Hopper did not feel so disappointed and disgusted by these revelations as the American traveller evidently expected him to be. He tried to look so, but in his secret soul he could not help feeling a little relieved to think that, after all, mountaineering was not such a tremendous undertaking.

Of course, now that he was come to Switzerland, Mr. Highcliff felt that he was morally obliged to go up mountains, he did not exactly know for what reason or for what object. But he felt that it would be expected of him, and we really do so many things that we don't want to do, or don't care about doing, simply because it is expected of us, that we ought not on this account to quarrel with our hero.

A day or two after Mr. Highcliff's arrival at Lucerne, a mountain excursion is proposed to be undertaken by some visitors staying in the same hotel as himself, with whom our mountaineer has made acquaintance. They are a young German with his wife and sister.

The Germans are a people upon whom, as being foreigners, Mr. Highcliff is rather inclined to look down. But as these particular Germans are friendly to him, and speak English tolerably well, Mr. Highcliff thinks them, in spite of their nationality, sensible people. Besides which, the ladies are certainly charming, especially the sister, thinks our hero.

They are going to ascend Pilatus.

Will Mr. *Icklifopaar* accompany them? they ask.

Mr. *Icklifopaar* will be delighted. Do they, he asks a little anxiously, intend to "walk up and down before breakfast?"

He is not sorry to find that their spirit of enterprise does not equal that of his American friend. But they arrange to start early.

"How do you propose to go?" asks Herr Stünfel of our mountaineer. "Would you walk, or perhaps mount on a horseback?"

"Oh! dear no," is Mr. Highcliff's prompt rejoinder. "I shouldn't think of riding, certainly not. An Englishman's legs are his—eh! what are they? Anyhow, I shall walk."

The fact is, that Mr. Highcliff has never at any period of his life even tried to persuade himself that he was a born horseman.

"Ah," says Herr Stünfel, "that is good. The ladies shall then divide a horse in two between them, and you and I shall walk comfortable."

"All right, I'll be ready, Mr. Stumble," says our hero, pleasantly.

The morning is pronounced to be, in weather, all that can be desired, cloudy enough to promise a glorious day, clear enough for an extensive view.

The mountaineers are eager for departure. Mr. Highcliff fancies it is slightly chilly, and dresses accordingly. As time goes on, however, he finds it pleasant to divest himself of one or two of his superfluous garments.

"Rather hot work, eh, Mr. Stump-up?" he gasps out at last to his companion.

"*Sar*, you will find it to become cooler as we proceed," says Herr Stünfel.

"What! do you mean to say that we're not near the top yet?" asks our poor puffing hero.

"I think we shall only just have begun the ascent. Is it not so?" inquires Herr Stünfel of the guide, who is leading madame's horse.

The sturdy young Swiss smiles, assures the gentlemen that it is "nothing," and that in less than an hour they will be half-way up.

"Half-way! good gracious! Do you mean to say, young man, that you expect us to go on in this fashion for the next three hours?" asks Mr. Highcliff, fiercely apostrophizing the guide. "Think how fatigued the ladies will be," he says, gallantly.

The guide is not quite sure that he comprehends the gentlemen. He expects nothing but a franc or two for *trinkgeld*, he says, and the path is very good. There is no danger.

"Bless my heart! I should hope not," returns Mr. Hopper, rather in alarm at the word.

If it were not for his reputation as a born mountaineer, as an Englishman, and as a man of gallantry, Mr. Hopper would certainly at this point turn his back upon Pilatus and bid it a long farewell—but *noblesse oblige*.

He plods wearily on. Then a dogged resolution takes possession of him. A Briton never turns his back upon a foe, he says softly to himself, by way of encouragement. And he has come to look upon Mount Pilatus as his personal enemy.

As such, he will conquer him or die!

When Mr. Highcliff Hopper does at length, by almost superhuman exertions, and by the aid of a good deal of pushing and pulling from one or two "natives," reach the summit of the mountain, he feels a great deal more like dying than conquering.

He has, however, the proud satisfaction of having "done it," while at the same time he registers on that mountain-top a solemn vow that he will never, never—so long as he lives—"do it again."

The prospect is a very fine one.



"Rather hot work, eh, Mr. Stump-up?"

"Oh, no doubt!"

Mr. Highcliff Hopper is ready to concede anything. But in truth, the finest prospect to him is the prospect of finding himself once more on the general level of humanity. Our hero, on the top of Pilatus, becomes humble-minded, and discovers that he has no real love of rising above his fellows.

"If I were only once more safe at the bottom!" he sighs despondingly.

It is a very difficult matter to descend from an elevated position gracefully. Mr. Hopper finds this to be the case—especially under the eyes of beauty. But in truth, he is not so much occupied with the manner as with the matter of the descent, and never did he breathe a sigh of more heartfelt thanksgiving than when he once more reached the haven of comparatively level ground.

The lower he descended, the higher rose his spirits; while at every step that he took towards the valley—weary, shaken, and footsore though he was—he felt himself more and more to be a mountaineer and a man. It is something in this world to have had experiences!

The next day Mr. Hopper and his German friends part company. They are *moving on*, as people in Switzerland do quite naturally, it would seem, without any exordium from the police.

Mr. Hopper has private reasons of his own for not wishing to "move on" quite so rapidly. The fact is, he is rather stiff from his unwonted exertions of yesterday, and is not quite sure whether he has brought his own legs down Pilatus with him, or whether he has not exchanged them on the mountain-top for a very shaky and indifferent pair indeed!

There is quite a touching adieu between our born mountaineer and his foreign friends, which takes place on a grassy little plateau behind the hotel.

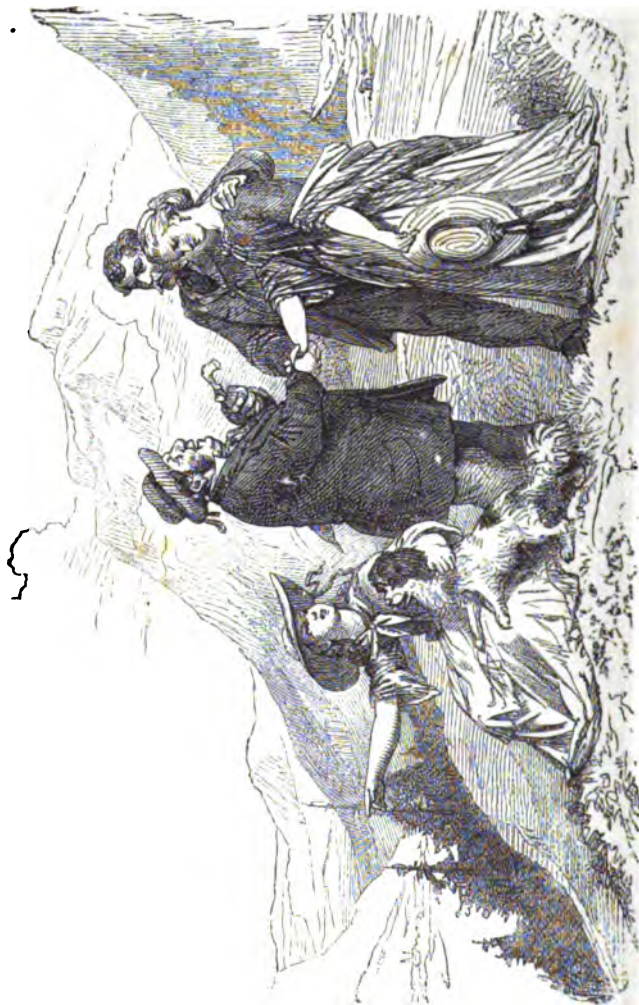
Mr. Highcliff shakes each one of the party warmly by the hand, and wishes them a pleasant time of it. (He hears they intend climbing more mountains, and hopes they will like it.)

To Herr Stünfel's pretty sister he would willingly say something specially amiable, but our good friend is unhappily not a born orator. One person cannot be a born *everything*! At the supreme moment words fail him.

"We are all very sorry that you do not come with us, Mr. *Ichlifopaar*," says Herr Stünfel; and adds, "My sister Trüdchen is very sorry."

At this speech Trüdchen naturally looks a little embarrassed. Mr.

Highcliff is also rather at a loss, although immensely gratified. It is evident to him that he has made an impression on this young foreigner.



"Bless my heart! that's very kind of Miss Toddlekins, I'm sure."

He clasps his umbrella tightly under his arm, and presses the lady's fingers.

"Bless my heart! that's very kind of Miss Toddlekins, I'm sure," he says.

"We are going to make up a party to ascend Titlis," says Herr Stünfel. "It will be a magnificent excursion. You had better come, *mistar*; I think you would enjoy yourself."



"Ah! you are very kind," returns our hero, a sort of alarm creeping over him, that if he doesn't take care he will be dragged up to the top of Mont Blanc before he knows where he is going. He goes on: "But

the fact is, Mr. Tumbleup, to me, a born mountaineer, these excursions have not quite the same charm as to you, don't you see? Novelty, and all that kind of thing, wanting, eh?"

"Ah! true. You would say, *sar*," responded the German gentleman, with the most polite imperturbability, "that you have already seen so much of the mountain-tops that you do not again feel a desire to see them any more? Is that so?"

"My dear Mr. Stumblealong, you couldn't have expressed my sentiments better," returned our hero, with a gasp of relief.

* * * * *

It cannot be said that Mr. Highcliff did not enjoy his three weeks' holiday in Switzerland. It must be a poor heart indeed which could fail to rejoice amid the scenes of so much beauty and grandeur.

For many a long day afterwards, through all the smoky din and sordid bustle of his city life, would come to our hero roseate visions of clear skies, snowy peaks, crimson sunsets, blue lakes, and happy, unruffled voyages made upon them, with laughing Swiss peasant girls for guides and *cicerones*; tender recollections, too, of a certain blue-eyed German maiden.

But as to going up mountains!

"No," said our born mountaineer. "One may have been born among 'em, without always wanting to be going up and down 'em, I should hope. Anyhow," addressing an imaginary audience, with an air of stern determination, "you won't catch me at it again—not if my name's Highcliff Hopper."

As his name was Highcliff Hopper, it is on record that he never was caught at it any more.

— 3 —

UP AN AFRICAN RIVER.

I SUPPOSE everybody knows Dr. Livingstone's narrative of his journey across Africa and descent of the Zambézi. People got the book as soon as it appeared, and read it, in spite of the lengthiness of some of the details, with as much eagerness as the last new novel. Certainly I did, and never skipped a page. But whether the reader may or may not be curious to know who I am, it is of course impossible for me to guess

and perhaps the idea is a little conceited. At any rate, all I intend to say about myself here is that a few months after reading Dr. Livingstone's book, I found matters so arranged as to enable me to become still better acquainted with the scenes he described, and if I fail in my attempt to add a few touches to the picture, it is entirely my own fault.

It is the morning of May Day, 1861. The little steamer *Pioneer*, under Dr. Livingstone's direction, has carried us down the Mozambique Channel, the sea is soon to be changed for the welcome smoothness of the Zambézi, the Kongone bar of which, with its white lines of breakers, only separates us from the river waters that glisten in front.

The appearance of the land is not very inviting, yet by no means so dismal as we have been led to expect. A wide beach of light yellow sand spreads away at low water to the flat country beyond, with forests of the mangrove extending evenly along the margin like a broad fringe. As far as the eye can see on either side this monotonous line remains unbroken, and only a slight gap is distinguishable where the Kongone mouth-stream makes its way out to the sea, emerging suddenly from the obscurity of the forest.

But there is only just time to make a rough sketch. Steam is up, and they are hard at work with the capstan; we are going to cross the bar directly. Taking a north-west course, we strike the channel and steam slowly from our anchorage in five fathoms of water. The intermittent cry of the man with the lead warns us that the depth is gradually decreasing, and the breakers, which looked like nothing more than rows of white fringe in the distance, begin to assume most dangerous dimensions. Steadily on, "Four, three, two by the mark," and now with a heave and rush underneath the ship, and a "swish" as the surf dashes high up over the deck, we are right among the breakers on the bar itself. Again we are suddenly lifted and hurried through the foam of the breaking wave, and we lie for a few seconds in the trough of the sea, with a ridge of surf sweeping on before us, and a swell like a mountain of water rolling up behind. "Quarter less two," shouts the leadsmen. "How will it be next time? Shall we touch, G——?" "Can't tell, sir; but look out," replies the old quartermaster; and we wait in breathless suspense as the little vessel rises once more, and once more the boiling waters whiz past and leave us in a hollow that would have done for the Atlantic. No, "Two by the mark;" we are all right; but little more than a fathom off the bottom is rather a close shave. Another roller or two lift and pass us by; the steady cry of the leadsmen shows

a still increasing depth, while the breakers are lower and farther between ; and at last the dreaded bar is safely crossed, and we pass easily down the channel into the smooth water of the river. The sight of the tremendous waves, however, rolling on over the lower part of the bar was quite sufficient to remind us of the sort of scrape we must have got into had we been so unfortunate as to miss the channel and ground on the ridge ; and we feel heartily thankful as it is that a few minutes ago we were on board our trusty little steamer, and spared the probable chance of capsize in a man-of-war's "whaler."

Of the seven mouths of the Zambézi, the Kongone, or Inyamisengo, as the natives call it, forms decidedly the best entrance. The breakers on this bar do not extend over more than five hundred yards, and with a favourable wind the passage can be easily effected in boats. But at the Quelimane bar, which the Portuguese use to enter the river, the waves continue to roll for a much greater distance, while their height on the calmest day increases the danger of crossing. At the Kongone the breakers, caused by the bar-shoal which runs out from Pearl Island, are scarcely perceptible in fine weather ; but when the wind is at all high, and especially if blowing off the sea, they come in with such size and violence that the bar is often impassable for days. The width of the river near the mouth is about a mile at low water, when the "Pearl" relinquishes its insular character, and, united by a somewhat higher run of the beach, becomes a point of the mainland. The banks vary from three to twelve feet in height ; and in the middle of the stream, just above the entrance, lies a low stretch of sand called "Pelican Island," which is covered by the flowing tide.

The anchor is dropped, and steam blown off, to the infinite surprise, no doubt, of some monkeys in the neighbouring tree, and the proposal is made for a stroll on shore to see if we can do anything with our rifles. Fresh spoor of buck has been reported on the sand, and the prospect of fresh meat is welcome after our long fare on ship's provisions. The party having agreed to take different directions, I chose the rough track of a hippopotamus for my path, which soon brought me to the bank of a small stream with wide borders of mangrove-bush on both sides, growing out of bare black mud. The water flowed still and deep between the greasy-looking banks ; and fully expecting to see a huge brown head and nose come surging up to the surface, I brought my rifle forward to be ready for a shot. But my first mark on the Zambézi was not to be a hippopotamus, for I soon learned that these side streams are

only his haunts at night, and that he returns at daybreak to the main river, where he remains until twilight again induces him to wander. The spot in which I was standing was a mangrove swamp, the prominent feature of most tropical shores. It was smaller than those which form so large a part of the Zambézi Delta near the coast, but exactly the same in character; belts of mangrove extending along the margins of the streams, which streams either connect the large mouth-branches or flow on to the sea from them as auxiliary outlets. Of the mangrove-tree itself there are several species, some merely low bushes, others growing to a height of from ten to forty feet. Here is one of the larger kinds, with foliage like the rhododendron. From the main stem; at a distance of from four or five feet from the ground, slender leafless branches are thrown out, which curve downwards and fix themselves in the soil so as to form upper roots for the additional support of the tree. It is a curious adaptation to the nature of the ground in which it grows, simply thick black mud to the depth of above a foot, without a blade of vegetation on the entire surface. The seed-pods of this tree show another peculiarity suited to the place. They are narrow and tapering, like the blade of a short sword. When ripe they fall point foremost and bury themselves in the mud, and in this way the seed is enabled to reach the firm soil below, where the young roots may obtain a stronger hold.

Underneath the mangroves, singular little fish, with heads like frogs, disport themselves in numbers on the top of the mud, moving along in short jumps by means of the tail and a pair of powerful side-fins. These frog-fish are to be found in every part of the Delta, and literally swarm on the edges of the streams during the heat of the rainy season. Then you are completely bewildered by the multitude of small land-crabs which rush about wherever the mud has got hardened by exposure; their little red legs twinkle away, carrying off the tiny black balls of bodies in rapid curves; and as they dive sidelong into their holes like diminutive burrows, the scene is changed in a moment, and the hitherto teeming mud-tract becomes a miniature wilderness.

Grassy tracts, often of considerable extent, lie between the mangrove swamps, covered with pea-like creepers bearing a rich purple flower. The long tough shoots of these creepers among the thick and tangled grass form one of the greatest possible nuisances, getting across the instep as you walk leisurely along, and bringing you every now and then to an unexpected standstill, preceded by a smart jerk forward. If you were to get a number of sheep-nets, spread them in succession over a meadow

field in England, and then make an attempt to walk across it, you would not have a bad illustration of my farther progress after I left the mangrove swamp for some jungle on my left, among which the graceful dwarf fan-palm grew in profusion.

The soil is firm and dry on these open tracts of jungle, and they abound in every part with a variety of insect life. Huge beetles drone past, and threaten to extinguish one of your eyes in their reckless flight. Richly-coloured dragon-flies dart about, and settle coquettishly on dead branches and earth heaps, for which they seem here to have a decided preference. The busiest of tiresome flies in every possible shape and colour buzz around with obtrusive intimacy, while elegant and beautiful butterflies float in the sunlight, or vanish over the palms and shrubs like living gems. The great green mangrove-fly, with his yellow head, skims past, keeping up a continued moan; and it is very well if he does pass, let me tell you, or a pang like that of some one slowly pressing a thorn into your flesh will teach you to keep a sharp look-out, when his moaning suddenly stops another time. Large locusts with red wings rise with a whiz at your feet, apparently possessed with the idea of soon becoming a species of partridge; it is the likeliest thing in the world that you will at first mistake them for quails, which rise with a similar noise, and are really only a size larger.

Then, what myriads of ants on the ground—some lively little red or black fellows, others with red bodies and grey-coloured extremities. It is most amusing to watch their movements as they seem to run to and fro on impossible errands, and come into violent collisions, afterwards amicably arranged in brief conferences on sandy patches, where they bustle and wind about in an everlasting maze of motion. These ants are harmless, and may be seen wherever the surface is dry and exposed; but others of a most ferocious character, half an inch long, and armed with a formidable pair of jaws like hooked and sharp-pointed forceps, are to be found in moist and sheltered places. They travel in long compact lines about a couple of inches in width, and by all means give them a wide berth if they are seen crossing the path, or perhaps making their way by your shady resting-place; otherwise you will probably discover their propensities in a rather unpleasant way. Only touch one of them with your boot, and—if you are foolish enough to despise “knickerbockers”—not less than a hundred will be up inside your trousers and over your person in an instant, where fixing their nippers in the parts you most cherish, they will writhe, and pull, and wrench like absolute little fiends, and seem

as if they would tear out your very flesh if their rage could give them the power. There is nothing for it but to strip yourself of every particle of clothing, and pick them off one by one with your fingers as patiently as the pain permits.

Birds are plentiful enough in the Delta, especially the bush-creepers but there are few with bright plumage, and still fewer musical. Game is abundant, including the waterbuck (*nakoswé*) and several kinds of smaller antelope (*boaré*, *poyo*, *msengo*, &c.), while the swampy borders of the streams, with their dense forests, are favourite resorts of the buffalo (*njati*). But to-day I had no chance of testing the powers of my new rifle. One of the party had been more successful, and brought on board a small "msengo," or bushbuck, which made a splendid supper, and was voted "capital."

Passing into the Luabo, or principal mouth of the *Zambési*, which gives its name to the whole of the surrounding district, we remain for a few days cutting wood for the steamer, and on the 7th of May start fairly up the river. The mangrove swamps continue for a mile or two above the coast, but are then displaced by the skirts of impenetrable forests in many parts of the banks. And what wonderful forests they are in their wild luxuriance! No sound, except that of their four-footed denizens, ever breaks the silence of unknown ages. No path has ever been made through the dense and curious under-growth that covers the ground for miles. Not an eye has seen, in their far recesses, the overhanging mass of intricate network, as the long cable-like creepers extend from branch to branch, and cross and intertwine under the thick canopy of leaves. We can only guess what it is from the tokens on either side.

The variety of trees is endless, with their rich covering of green, but not more so than the climbers which hang from them in festoons, or the fantastic parasitical plants that droop from their boughs. The queen of palms, the graceful *pandamus*, appears at intervals in the distance, recalling familiar scenes as it tapers above the forest like the church spire of some dear old English village. In many places on the bank the beautiful yellow blossoms of the "*mlola*," changing to dark red before they fall, mingle their brighter hue with the purple flowers of *convolvuli*; in others the long scimitar-like pods of the "*taba maritima*" hang over the stream, and drop the bean, with a diameter of two inches, into the deep muddy waters that wash the roots. A little farther on again the eye wanders through ranks of tall mangrove-trees, the gloom thrown by their shadow over the slimy desolation of the swamp forming a singular con-

trast with the sunlight on the foliage above. To one accustomed to the wild flowers and ferns, sheltered by the grand forest oaks of old England, it is a strange, and perhaps not very inviting scene ; nor does the slope of mud left at ebb of tide along the edge of all the Delta streams help to make the prospect in any way more agreeable.

Whatever we may think of the forests of the Delta,—and they are certainly very grand,—they have one great disadvantage, that of shutting out the breeze, and making the air sultry and oppressive. The river comes down in a fine broad stream, only it is rather muddy, especially at the sides, and the amount of decaying vegetable matter floating in heaps on the surface, or lying under the banks, is decidedly unwholesome. In some places we can almost see miasma steaming up where the sun strikes hottest,—and no wonder, for we are in the stronghold of Zambézi fever, and none of us expect to be so lucky as to escape. The attack usually commences with a sharp pain in the back, accompanied by severe headache, and most probably sickness. Then follows a long fit of shivers, making the heaviest blankets acceptable, with the thermometer at ninety-six degrees in the shade, and after that several hours of fever-heat, attended in some cases with profuse perspiration. This over, you soon feel perfectly well again, though rather weak and nervous ; and if omitted when the premonitory pain in the back was felt, now is the time to have recourse to calomel and rhubarb, followed up soon after by a strong dose of quinine. It ought not to be less than four or five grains, and this must be repeated at intervals of a few hours for the next day or two, or the paroxysm will recur sooner or later, according as the fever is intermittent or remittent. Should it not be checked after these almost infallible specifics, coma sets in at last, and then the issue is clear. The worst of it is, however, that one attack does not lessen the chance of another, but rather the contrary ; and you may heartily congratulate yourself on having a good stock of calomel and quinine, with a proportionate amount of other medical items it is unnecessary to enumerate.

But we are all well or convalescent as we approach the head of the Delta, rejoicing that we have got through the worst part of the journey. An overpowering sense of unhealthiness, in that swampy waste, gave our pill-boxes and quinine-bottles such a novel character—quite a friendly here-I-am-at-a-pinch appearance—in their cupboard, that we could really believe they contained confections rather than physic ! But no sooner is the region of mud and mangroves left behind than the air loses its oppressiveness and becomes fresher ; while the country, opening out in

grassy steppes or picturesque woodlands, begins to look a little more as if people *could* live in it. Not indeed that the lower Delta lands are altogether without inhabitants; for many strips of drier country, displacing the swamps, are sought for the dwellings of the "mud people,"—so called in contradistinction to the "sand people," living higher up the Delta; but where a malaria-proof native would flourish to a good old age, the European would either die soon, or be a shrivelled-up, sour old man at forty. These strips of fertile land,—like the upper Delta levels through which we are passing,—are dotted with groves of cocoa-nut, mango, fig, and cashew-nut-trees; while extensive fields of rice, maize, beans, and cassava-bushes, with their elegant foliage, surround the huts of the natives, half hidden by screens of bananas. The whole of the higher Delta districts are rather thickly populated; and the mild, easy disposition of the people so far favours the dominion of the Portuguese, that, however odious in other respects, it at least gives them security from outer enemies.

Mazaro, a large village, half Portuguese, half native, marks the head of the Delta, about eighty miles above the coast. Crowds of the inhabitants appear on the bank to watch our approach, the *Pioneer* going on "chaji" (by itself) and being an object of universal admiration. The village consists of fifty or sixty good-sized huts, square in form and well built, though the materials are only reeds and mud, with a small stockaded fort erected by the Portuguese, whose flag waves on a low staff near it. Beyond this stands the house of Signor Vianna,—a great landholder and slaveowner,—surrounded by reed outhouses for cattle and grain, and the smaller huts of the slaves. By means of the latter the Signor cultivates extensively, and does a good trade on the Zambézi, in oilseed and cassava-root, and in rice, beans, and native corn, which are in great request among the colonists for their domestic slaves. In times of drought the settlements on the Upper Zambézi draw all their supplies from the Delta regions; for while the harvests never fail on these lower lands, in the dry country above scarcely three years ever pass without a season of scarcity.

At last, then, we are fairly out of the Delta; and as we leave Mazaro the air comes fresh and freely over the broad grassy plains that stretch away on both sides of the river. The cocoa-nut-palm is now getting bare on the banks, but in its room appears the tufted palmyra, here covering immense tracts, or elsewhere standing in gaunt solitude. Far away are to be seen clumps of bush, and beyond them forests of magnificent trees, where the natives make the large canoes, or "kôches," as tribute

for their Portuguese masters. Behind these forests the country rises in rapid undulations in front ; on the left the plains continue to the horizon, and on the right the distant view is bounded by dark-blue mountain-peaks. Our attention is drawn to the nearest one, encircled by groups of small hills, about thirty miles off : it is Morambala, not far from the confluence of the Shiré, marking the first approach to highland country.

The width of the Zambési above Mazaro varies from half a mile to more than two miles, where the soft yielding banks have been worn away by the current. The dry season (from May to October) has just commenced, so that the river, having been in flood during the two previous months, is beginning to get low and leave bare the shoals and sandbanks formed by the force of the stream. These are completely submerged in the rainy season, when navigation is tolerably easy, as a deep channel can everywhere be traced by the colour and appearance of the water. But the existence of these sandbanks, shifting as they do annually, and re-forming in other places, will always prove a difficulty in navigating the Zambési ; nor will it ever be practically navigable,—should modern enterprise at any time attempt to make it so,—unless with flat-bottomed vessels of light draught like those on some of the American rivers. And then come the rapids of Kebrabasa,—only a few miles above Jette, and three hundred from the sea. No one knows how this difficulty is to be got over, unless a canal could be taken round the falls, or unless steamers could be built sufficiently small for the narrow chasm, yet powerful enough to stem the torrent rushing with its pent-up waters between the walls of perpendicular rock. After Kebrabasa, however, the river presents no serious obstacle to farther progress, until the vapour-columns are visible above the Victoria Falls.

During the middle of the dry season, when the water is often so shallow as to prevent canoes passing along, the Zambési presents a very remarkable appearance. You proceed through a region feebly described as sterile. Around you in the sun lies an archipelago of sandbanks, white, glistening, and bare, except for occasional groups of water-birds, and what you will no doubt take for a sun-dried log on the edge of the sand. But if so, you are wrong, and you observe your mistake as the assumed log, evidently mistrusting your intentions, suddenly elevates an unmistakable alligator snout, and shambles lazily into the water on four previously invisible legs. No wonder a shudder comes over you at the idea of bathing, though you are in latitude sixteen degrees fifteen minutes south, and the midday sun burns down on your head and back like fire ;

neither is your aversion to the water likely to be at all lessened as some insignificant-looking specks are pointed out on the surface, and you are quietly told that each one of them is the crown of an alligator's head ! Some of these Zambési sand islands are of considerable extent, with flat tops and high cliff-like sides : you glide easily up the stream that curves in and out among them ; but as you go on in the same way, hour after hour, it seems so like threading the mazes of a wild and intricate labyrinth, that at last a consciousness of inextricability possesses you—that peculiar suffocating feeling of never being able to get out again.

Seven or eight miles beyond Mazaro we reach Shupanga, a village in a "prazo" with the same name. Close to the river stands a roomy house, built of bricks, with a tiled roof, and, like all the colonial dwellings of the Portuguese, one-storeyed. Its last occupant was Donna Pascoa, a lady of repute in these parts as the possessor of a body of soldiers, or rather armed slaves, with whom for many years she made a successful resistance against the incursions of some southern Kafirs. They are called Manhambosi here, and Mapsite farther north, and belong to a numerous and powerful tribe, who, under a warlike chief, Manikose, became notorious among the Portuguese as the "fighting Landeens." This name, the result of frequent forays on the detached settlements of the Zambési, is a perfect bugbear to the colonists, who readily pay a periodical black mail to avoid their depredations. The Donna was a noted character in many other respects ; but having died several years ago, the house since her time has not been inhabited.

The native tribes on the Zambési are now very indistinct, though the language varies in dialect about every ten miles. Except in their tribal relations they have been little disturbed by the Portuguese, whose real territory lies on both sides of the river about three hundred miles above the Delta, but does not extend far inland. It is divided into prazos differing in area, the greater number of which are the property of the Colonial Government, and let to private individuals on long leases at a merely nominal rent. The Delta lands are all leased in the same way ; the fact of one person possessing a farm of forty or fifty square miles being more common than the holding of four or five hundred acres in England. The inhabitants, called "colonos," or serfs, live by cultivating the land, for which they pay an annual tribute per head ; usually a bag of corn, rice, or beans, or sometimes, if these are wanting, slaves ! The chiefs of the villages are trusty slaves of the proprietor, bearing the official title of "Mwanamambo." Their duty is to represent the proprietor among his

"colonos," to watch his interests, and to collect the tribute as soon as it becomes due. But they derive no profit from the crops, nor do they receive any kind of payment except the daily rations of food which are allowed them in common with the inferior slaves. Sometimes a portion of land is given up for their own use, especially when their villages are distant from the settlements: in such cases their huts are superior to those commonly built, and they assume a much more important position among the natives. Yet this is their only privilege, without the hope of freedom to lighten their lot. When estates are near towns, or the owners live upon them, the land is cultivated by regular agricultural slaves. They go out in bands at sunrise under the superintendence of an inferior "mwanamambo," who summons them with a horn, and walks about while they are at work, armed with a terrific whip. There are a few free native landowners, but they give themselves great airs, and the Portuguese regard them as an intolerable nuisance.

It is hard to have to confess that the policy of the Zambesi colonist, and especially that of his half-caste heir, is simply unmitigated oppression. The idea of education is altogether tabooed; equally so that of morals. The "négro basta" is utterly incapable of either. But it is also depressing to find how soon the natives themselves become debased, and how lost they are to the sense of self-respect which alone sustains the value or liberty. "Colonos" are trained into the most adroit slave-dealers, and they have often been known to sell themselves into lower servitude, and go and purchase slaves of their own with the proceeds! Nevertheless, instances are not wanting to show that a feeling of wrong remains uppermost; and if so great a part of the population did not consist of important slaves, or fugitives from war-stricken tribes, it is probable that the Portuguese would soon cease to be masters of the Zambési.

The slave of a Portuguese commandant on the Zambési was once seen by a companion of mine chained to a post in a deep hole, emaciated, and wounded on the back with repeated flogging; the most miserable object it is possible to conceive. My friend pleaded for him, and he was released. He had been guilty of the heinous crime of attempting to run away. Some time afterwards he is out at work. His master calls him; but being on the open bank and the wind against him, his name has to be called three times before he hears and answers with becoming alacrity. He is severely beaten with a heavy three-thonged whip of buck-hide. The poor man, under the shame and pain of undeserved punishment, goes to a fellow-slave and complains, "I did nothing. I could not hear

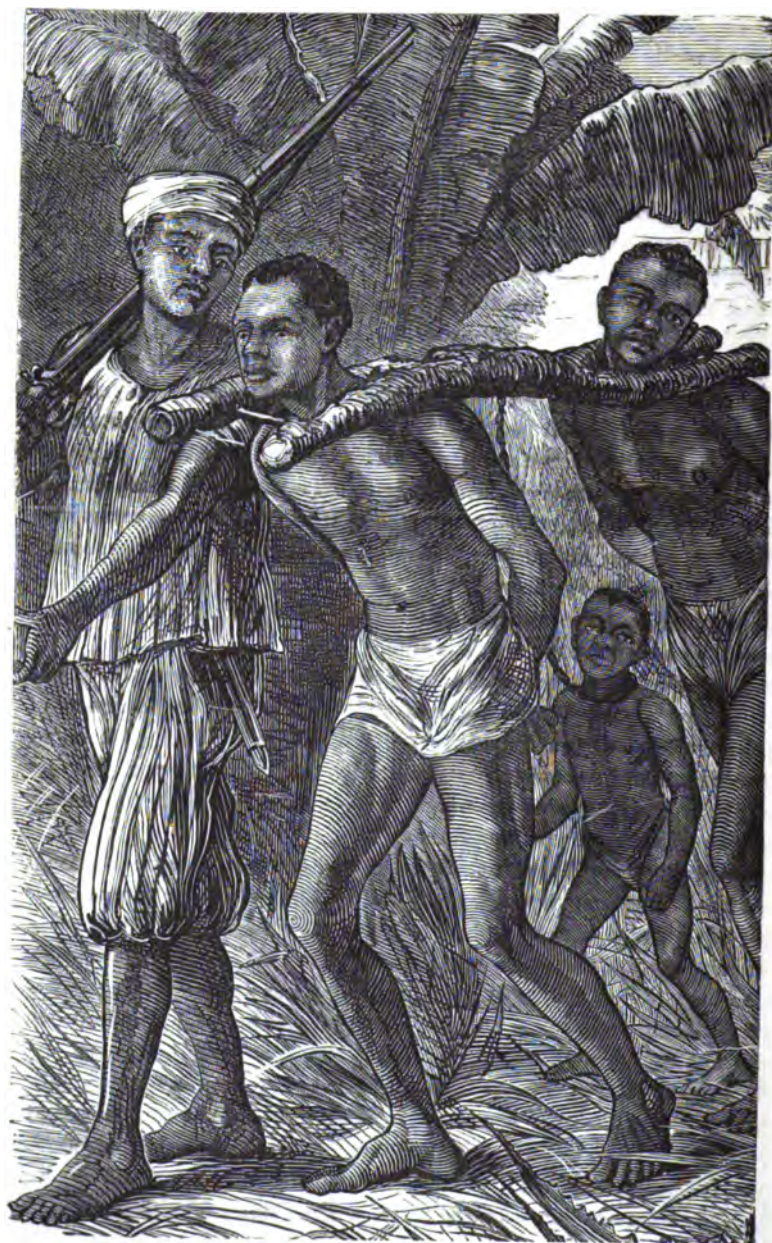
him call. My heart will be bitter a long time for this." The master is informed of his contumacy; summons him, and with orthodox voice and manner asks, "Why did you say your heart was bitter because you were punished? Haven't I a right to whip you? Aren't you my slave? Is not your heart, and blood, and bone mine, to do anything I like with?" The slave, it appears, did not think so, as he soon after ran away with some others, who, very fortunately for them, were not retaken. The master himself told me the story of the flogging, and showed me the whip with the utmost *sang-froid*.

Here is another story on the same authority—a slave woman beaten to death. Her fault is taking part in a native superstitious ceremony, for which she is accused of witchcraft. Her master (a half-caste) admits her guilt, and condemns her to be thrown to the alligators. As they are taking her to the river, a free native chief meets them, and remonstrating against the severity of the sentence, advises that, instead of killing, they should be content with giving her a flogging. The master, a little ashamed of his cruelty, perhaps, but more frightened at its reaching the ears of the authorities, relaxes his purpose and has her whipped; but so severely that she dies under the lash!

I was one day at the commandant's residence. "Who is your friend?" I asked, as a visitor took his departure.

"Do you call him my friend or my neighbour?" was the reply. "His brother beat a slave-woman to death, and, directed by the Governor (of Quelimane), I had him brought here and put in chains. But as no further instruction followed, I was obliged to release him; and the only result is that both he and his family try to keep in favour by frequently paying me visits and sending presents!"

Another incident illustrates rather forcibly the native's sense of wrong. A certain Portuguese Signor, near Shupanga, formed the not uncommon habit of spending a great deal of his time in drinking spirits, and when less than half conscious from the effects, making his slaves fan him as he lay on his bed. When sober, his principal amusement was ill treating them. On one occasion his so-called native wife happened to incur his resentment for want of proper attention, and, in fear of the consequences, took refuge with some of her friends. Having found out where she was, he followed and brought her away in spite of most earnest entreaties, and soon after had her deliberately shot before his eyes by one of her fellow-slaves. The Governor of Quelimane was in the neighbourhood at the time, but witnesses were wanting to prove the killing of a negro, for, of



course, no native's word is evidence ! Not long afterwards he was crossing the river in a canoe, as usual, half intoxicated. His own slaves were paddling ; but the canoe was large, the weather perfectly calm, and there were no sunken trees for them to run against. Yet, significantly enough, an upset took place, and no helping hand saved the murderer from his fate, though every negro on the Zambézi knows well how to swim.

The truth is, the Portuguese are afraid of their slaves, and think they can only overawe them by cruelty and oppression. The legal enactments of the province of Mozambique on slavery would, if thoroughly carried out, make it as mild an institution as it possibly could be ; but as the slaves themselves are ignorant of the laws, and it is the interest of their owners to keep them so, the effect is the same as if they never existed. The colonists, living isolated, as so many of them do, and often far remote from any legal supervision, act pretty much as they please ; while governors, commandants, and other officials, being known to countenance and actually engage in slave traffic, would hardly be the persons to make strict investigations. Thus the law requires every slave to be registered at the Custom House of Quelimane, and none can be legally kept in servitude unless entered in proper form. Yet this is not done in the case of two-thirds of the existing number, who are therefore virtually free if they did but know it. Again, no slave ought to be retained as such more than seven years after purchase, the theory being that in that time he redeems his price by service ; but there is not a slave bought on the Zambézi who does not remain so as long as he lives. The children of bought slaves, too, are free, if any one would only volunteer the suicidal information. It is illegal for any private person to inflict punishment on his slave, who ought to be sent to prison, or flogged at the public whipping-post by a soldier ; but this law is certainly infringed in the most cruel manner possible. In fact, while a poor state like that of Portugal attempts to maintain her colonial dependencies by leaving her officials there to shift with shadows of salaries, they will try to create a substance out of something ; and if legal enactments interfere with the profits of the slave-trade, or the advantages of slave possession, they are quietly set aside, and no despatch to the Home Government ever holds a list of delinquents. It is harsh, but too like truth, what my Zambézi friend—thief catching thieves, I fear—testified of his fellow-colonists, “ The Portuguese here are rascals ! ”

A TASTE OF THE SEA.

MY mother was dead, and my father thrashed me, and nobody cared for me, and so I cut away from home. Home! 't wasn't much of a home, as you may believe, to cut away from, but I wished myself back in it many a time after. I was crazy to get to sea; I thought sailors were jolly all day long. If I'd only known what a dog's life it is! But somehow you get used to it; anyhow, you can't get out of it, for there's nought else for you to do.

It was Liverpool I cut to, and as I was going down Water Street, I got into talk with a chap who asked me what I wanted.

"A ship," says I; and 't wasn't long before I was aboard of one, at nothing a month. I didn't sign no articles. I was a strong healthy lad, and the skipper was short of hands, and so he was glad to snap me up just as he was sailing. The chap that had took me off grinned when he wished me good luck. Nice luck I had! It was an old sugar-ship, swarming with cockroaches like a henhouse with fleas, and the bilge-water was enough to stifle one. But 't wasn't that so much I cared about. No wonder the skipper was short of hands. Nobody that had sailed with him once would sail with him twice, if he could help it. We hadn't half enough to eat, and what there was was so bad nobody but famished folk would have eaten it. We used to say that the junk was a bit of the old ship pickled in her bilge-water, and if you didn't look sharp the biscuit would wriggle out of your hand. And then the old man was always bullyragging and beating of us. If we'd been slaves he couldn't have treated us worse or worked us harder.

I cut at Kingston. A nigger we'd aboard took me to a house where I lived till I got another ship. They were all niggers there except me, but they behaved a deal more like Christians than the skipper, and there was plenty like him. Old Mam Dinah's wasn't over-clean, but it was a deal better than that old ship. The old woman took a fancy to me. I do believe she would have married me, though she was pretty nigh fit to be my grandmother. Anyhow, she made me as comfortable as ever she could, though I wasn't earning anything while I stayed at her house, and cried when I went away.

I shipped aboard of a Newfoundland schooner that had come to Jamaica with salt fish, and was taking back rum and molasses. Her

skipper was an old Scotchman. Go where you will you'll find a Scotchman, a crow, and a Newcastle grindstone. He seemed a decent sort of man—at any rate, after the other; but I hadn't much time to know anything about him, for almost as soon as we were out of sight of land a storm came on. The lightning struck the foremast, split it as you might cut a stick, and the rum caught. It was everybody for himself then. I started a water-cask, and cut it loose. Then I rolled it to the lee side, and pitched it overboard when I'd made a rope fast to it. Then I jumped overboard, and hauled in, hand over hand, till I could get a good grip of the lashing I'd passed round, and so I bumped about holding on to her like grim death. What became of the other poor chaps I don't know—never heard. Thank God, He saved my life, as He's done many a time since, though it don't seem scarce worth saving for the use I've made of it.

After tossing about for I don't know how long—it made me as sick as a dog—I was washed up on a little island. All sand and bushes it seemed, with oysters and such sticking on to the boughs. I crawled on till I couldn't see any more of them, so that I might be above high-water-mark, and then I lay down and slept, I do believe, pretty nigh twenty-four hours. I was dead beat. When I awoke I was pretty near dry for all the drenching I had had, and I was afire with thirst. The sun was shining right on my face, as it can shine in those parts. It's almost a wonder that I didn't get a sunstroke, but it's when it comes level to the back of your head there's most danger of that. I felt giddy when I got on my legs, and my tongue and lips and the roof of my mouth were just like burnt leather. It was ever so long before I could find any fresh water, and I thought I should have gone mad. At last I came upon an old cask branded $\frac{A^B}{72}$ that had been washed ashore Heaven knows when. It was driven slanting into the ground, with the head staved in, and was as full as it could hold of the rain that had fallen in the storm—leastways, perhaps some of it had been dried up, for the sand round was quite dry. I took a good drink; it was a bit brackish, but it put heart into me again. Then I looked about for something to cover up the cask with, for there was no signs of more rain coming, and I was afraid the fierce sun would dry up all the water before I could find any more. I found an old plank or two, and laid them across with bushes on the top of 'em.

When I'd quenched my thirst I began to feel hungry, and set-to upon the oysters. There was plenty of them. I wasn't likely to starve, at any rate. When I'd finished the oysters I could set-to on the sea-birds' eggs

and the turtles' eggs—lots of them, and they don't taste bad raw. And then there were the birds and the turtles, if I could have cooked them. The birds anyhow were easy enough to catch; they'd scarce move when you trod upon them. How I was to get water and fire were my troubles, but I didn't bother my head much about fire then, with that hot sun blazing down on me like a fiery furnace.

When I had eaten my fill, I was glad to crawl into the shade of some bushes a little higher up than my water-tank. I twisted them together so that they almost kept out the sun, and lay down on the sand and felt almost comfortable. At night I uncovered my tank in case rain should fall while I was asleep, and then lay down again in my booth and tried to go to asleep, but I couldn't. I'd had a long rest, and the wind began to blow cold. I covered myself up with the sand and some dry seaweed, and there I lay looking at the stars and listening to the sea and the wind, and I felt uncommon lonely. I fell asleep towards morning, and dreamt about mother. It was queer to wake up in that wild place without a soul to speak to. Not but what there was plenty of row. The birds made plenty—fit to deafen one. I began to grizzle about the water—it was going so fast. But then rain came—more than I wanted. I was scarce ever dry. The rain came through the bushes, however tight I might tie 'em—drip, drip, drip, on my nose, or else in a regular down-pour—and it soaked through the sand, though I piled a great heap of it over me, and it wasn't comfortable. I wanted a fire to warm me and to look at for company, and something hot to eat. It's toothachy to have nothing but oysters and raw eggs, and only cold water to wash 'em down, in rainy weather. I was keen for a roast fowl of some sort with plenty of gravy. But how was I to light a fire to roast it? I'd lost my knife, and if I'd got flint and steel, where was my tinder and fuel that would catch? But I'd luck; I picked up an old bone-handled table-knife. Rusty enough it was, but I polished it up, and there were plenty of pebbles would strike sparks. But the bushes were so sodden for ever so long, I couldn't make a fire. When the sun came out again, they dried fast enough, and after a bit of trouble I got a good fire out of the leaves and branches I'd gathered. It scared the birds a bit. However, I'd soon wrung the necks of a pair of 'em, and flung them on in their feathers. I didn't care so much about hot food then, when the weather was hot again, but still somehow it seemed more Christian-like than those cold things for everlasting, and not a drop of grog to keep them from lying heavy on your stomach.

I can't rightly say how long I was on that there island, for I lost my reckoning—one day was so much like another; and when the water was out, I lost my head too. No food is bad, but no drink's worse. I've heard tell of people drinking sea-water, but I can scarce believe it. I tried it, and it made me sick just like physic. I'd no lack of food—birds and eggs and oysters, and turtle now and again, and, when it was calm, I sometimes caught some fish. I made my hooks out of shells, and the bushes there have a sort of inner bark you can twist just like string, so I did not want for lines. You can get used to anything if it last long enough, but I got precious sick of living all by myself. Not a sail came in sight—for months it must have been. The island was quite out of the track to anywhere—it ain't down in any chart I've seen.

But one morning when I turned out, I saw a rakish-looking brig close in, too smart for a merchantman, and yet she didn't look just like a gun-brig, though I guessed somehow, from the look of her ports, she carried guns. Presently off came a boat. A queer lot of all sorts was in her. Most of 'em began to jabber some sort of English when they found I was English, but there was only one of them I could make out, a Yankee, who was chief mate of the brig, or whatever they call it aboard of such a craft. He took me on board, and a queer lot there was there too, men of pretty nigh every country. Anyhow, there was Greeks, and a Lascar, and Spaniards, and Creoles, and niggers, and a Chinee, and Dutchmen, and a good sprinkling of English, some of 'em run-away man-of-war's men, and all sorts. The captain was a Chilian, and called his brig a privateer; but a pirate, that's what she was. She made war on all nations when their vessels were weak enough for her to take.

However, I was glad enough to be aboard of any craft again, at first. But after a bit, when I'd seen their goings on, I began to think that if I was took aboard of such a craft, I should have to squeak for it. Of course, I'd to do as I was bid, else I should have had a knife or a bullet in me pretty quick, and then been pitched overboard for the sharks. But I didn't do any more wickedness than I could help.

There was a little English barque we took. Every man Jack aboard her had to walk the plank. She was from Vera Cruz, with a lot of silver aboard. We took it out of her, and then we burnt her. The skipper'd got his wife with him, and he shot her through the head himself and then pitched her overboard, when he found what a precious set of blackguards was down on him. Best thing he could have done! He was a game little chap. Overboard he walked as quiet as if he was going to



his bunk. Some of the other poor fellows had to be helped. I was ashamed of myself, standing still and seeing Englishmen murdered that fashion by a lot of mongrel foreigners; but what could I do?

The Chili fellow was very cheeky. He carried on so that he got well known, but he didn't care. He said that there wasn't a man-of-war afloat that could catch his brig if she choose to show a clean pair of heels, and that she could lick any vessel of her own size.

But there came a very fast corvette on the station—*Clio*, or some such was her name—and she hunted us in and out like a ferret, and at last she nailed us. Up she came in the second dog-watch on the starboard tack. We were on the other, and what must our dare-devil of a Chili chap do but run right athwart her bows, to make out he could sail faster. She struck us on the quarter and cut right through. The brig went up like a horse on its hind legs, and then down she went stern foremost, and most of those that was in her. They didn't leave many dear friends to bitterly bewail their loss. Some that was saved got hanged. I was only a youngster still, and so the navy captain believed my story, and I was made much of by men and officers both.



THE BITER BIT;

OR, CAPTAIN H——'S PET MONKEYS.

"I KEEP my old friend in sight, you see," says Captain H——, pointing seaward, as we sit over our dinner, in real tropical fashion, on the verandah of his trim little cottage, on the south coast of Jamaica.

"Ay," he continues, "I can't lose sight of the sea; every whiff o' the salt water's like the breath of life to me, blest if it ain't! I've heard tell of some chap who made a big fortin' in the candle trade, who, even after he'd retired, used to go down to the works every boiling day, and snuff up the smell o' the melted grease, as if 'twas meat and drink to him! And just so it is with me; I cannot do without the sea-air, nor the sea-water neither. Every morning before breakfast I tramp down to the shore, and have my bath in there behind the reef, where the sharks can't get at me! If I *have* given up the sea, and taken sarvice ashore, I'm not going to lose sight of my old friend, for all that!"

"You have a snug berth of it, sure enough," remark I, glancing around me; "but how do you do for company?"

"Company!" echoes the old sailor, with his jolly laugh; "I'm well enough off for *that*, never fear! There's three of my old chums settled within half a mile of me; and grand jollifications we have together every now and then. Then the people of the place are a nice pleasant lot, and as hospitable as can be; and, altogether, I can't complain of being short of company—that I can't!"

My host drinks off his sangaree with a complacent air, and resumes:

"Now that we talk of company, I'll just show you some of a new sort. I'm going to invite three friends of mine to dessert, and you just see what you think of them. Keep your eye on the railing of the verandah."

He tinkles a small silver hand-bell, which stands on the table beside him. Its sound is instantly followed by a rattle of the trelliswork along the front of the verandah, and over its top shoot, like so many rockets, three small grey monkeys, which, alighting on their feet (or rather hands) beside their master's chair, look wistfully up in his face, like children expecting a treat.

"Those are *my* after-dinner guests, you see," says the Captain, chuckling at my astonishment. "I've got no children of my own, so I've taken to what should be the next best thing, if Master Darwin ain't out of his reckoning. I've trained these little beggars, till they know my bell as well as ever my crew knew the pipe of the boatswain's call; and they're well disciplined, too. Just offer 'm some grub, and you'll see."

I break up a biscuit, and hold out the fragments in my hand. The three "boys in grey" lick their lips, and eye the treat wistfully, but never budge an inch.

"Time, boys!" shouts the Captain, clapping his hands.

There is a rush and a scuffle, and my palm is empty in a moment.

"It took me a good while to get 'em to that," says my host, leaning back in his chair with the air of a man who has done his duty. "They're terribly greedy beggars naturally, just the same as their mother—though *she* paid for it, poor old girl, sorely enough. One day I'd been fool enough to leave the door of my cabinet open, and she sneaked in and got hold of a bottle of vitriol that I'd been working with——"

"Good gracious! She didn't drink it, surely?"

"She did, though, poor thing! and when I ran in, startled by her screams, I found her regularly *twisting* on the floor, and crying out like a child. But when I saw the bottle lying beside her, I knew it was all

up; and I snatched down a pistol from the wall, and put the poor thing out of her misery."

"And so you lost your pet?"

"I lost that one; but there were the five young 'uns left, and a precious



bother they were! Nothing was too hot or too heavy for them; they stole, and broke, and tore, and messed, and played old gooseberry with everything they could get hold of. I remember an old Frenchman coming to call on me once, and leaving his snuff-box on the table while he went with me to see the upper rooms. In the meantime, as ill luck would have it, one of my 'friars of orders grey' got sight of the box, and, like Meddle.

some Matty in the poem, went to work to open it, and with pretty much the same result. We upstairs heard a screech like a parrot in torment, and then a volley of sneezing fit to tear the roof off; and when we came rushing down, there we found Master Jacko flying up and down the room as if for a wager, and sneeze, sneeze, sneeze, as if he'd blow every hair off his body!

"One look at him was enough for me. I dropped into a chair, and laughed till I fairly cried. But the old Mossos took it into his head that I'd set the brute to do it on purpose to make a fool of *him*; and he flew into a furious passion, and swore he'd have my life. He might have had it, too, for all I could do to hinder him, for I was fairly helpless with laughing; but the monkey, seeing this fellow stamping and shaking his fists, came right opposite, and began to imitate him; and the more the Frenchman howled, and stamped, and grinned, the more the monkey screamed and chattered and made faces at him, and the more I laughed and roared at seeing them both—till, upon my word, it was as bad as being in Bedlam! And, to crown all, my black servant, John, hearing the bobbery, burst in as we were in the middle of our exercises, and stood petrified, with his hands up in the air, like a telegraph signal on a railway!"

Here the Captain pauses for a moment to indulge in a great jolly roar, which echoes through every corner of the quiet house like a peal of thunder.

"Another time," he resumes, "the eldest of 'em (who was by far the worst of the whole batch) happened to see me shaving; and the minute my back was turned, he up with the razor and tried it on too. The first thing he did was to cut a great gash in his cheek, and then very nearly to slice his nose off (as much of a one as he had). It was as good as a play to see him jump when he felt the cut, and put his hand to the place and stare at the blood that came off upon it; and then he dashed the razor to the ground, and began stamping on it like fury. But stamping on a razor is pretty much like kicking a pig—the aggressor generally gets the worst of it; and he cut his paws so jollily, that he sang out fit to frighten the French!"

"They seem to have been rather an unlucky set, these pets of yours!" remark I, as well as I can speak for laughing.

"*Rather!*" echoes the Captain, with a broad grin. "However, they got a good lesson at last, and they haven't forgotten it yet, as you'll see directly. John, bring in the guava jelly."



Prompt at the word, in comes black John, with a flat dish surmounted by a huge wickerwork cover. At sight of it the three monkeys assume a look of unmistakable terror, and shrink back as if from a threatened blow; but when the Captain puts forth his hand to raise the cover, the whole trio vanish over the edge of the balcony with a shrill chatter of dismay.

"You see," says the old sailor, laughing at my bewildered look—"you see that a monkey's memory is good for something, after all. It's just like the old story of the parrot who scalded his head-feathers off, trying to get at some pickled cockles, and then, the next time he met a bald man, screeched out, 'Ah! *you've* been at the pickled cockles too!'"

"But what's the story, then?" ask I.

"Well, this was how it happened: after the razor misadventure, I thought it high time to put the ringleader in irons, and lock up the other four; and then, for a while, things went smoothly enough. Now, just about this time, a friend made me a present of a swarm of bees; and set up the hive in the garden, just by the corner of the house. A few days after that, as my ill luck would have it, I let the four minor malefactors out of the bilboes, thinking that, as their chief was still hard and fast, they couldn't do much mischief.

"Well, I'm blest if the first thing these beauties did wasn't to go and let the other fellow out!—I suppose by tugging out the staple that his chain was fixed to, for that was how I found it when I came to look. Then down they went into the garden, and scenting the honey, they ran to it, knocked over the hive, and grabbed a fistful of the comb apiece.

"Well, you may imagine the result! Out came the bees in hundreds, and fell upon them like fury, and there was such a scamper as you never saw in your life. One ran up to the top of the house, another flew up a tree, a third jumped bodily into the pond, leaving only the tip of his nose above water. The smallest tried to hide under the hive itself; but it would only cover his head, and they touched him up so behind, that he howled like a town-crier.

"It was a bad job for 'em, though, poor beasts! Two were so stung that they died outright; and the other three took nursing enough to bring 'em round again. But from that day to this, the mere sight of a hive, or anything like one, half a mile off, is enough to send 'em into fits. Now shall I give you some jelly?"

THE FAIR PILOT OF LOCH URIBOL.

A YACHTING EPISODE.

ON the afternoon of a summer day, a small schooner yacht, closely reefed, made her appearance off the mouth of Loch Urìbol, a long and lonely fjord in the remote Hebrides of Scotland, and while beating to and fro in the open sea in the midst of the squalls from the neighbouring mountains, hoisted the inverted red flag to the foremast as a signal that the parties on board were in need of assistance.

It had been a dark, dry day, with the wind blowing fresh from the west very steady and strong, and the yacht, a tiny thing of fifteen or sixteen tons, with a small cockpit, had been beating since early dawn across the tossing waters of the Minch, which divides the dark serrated peaks of Skye from the far-off Outer Isles. Lightly as a bird she had bounded over the great rollers of the sea, splashing the foam over herself from stem to stern, but seldom taking on board a drop of "green." The distance across was thirty miles, and the wind was dead ahead, so that her progress westward was slow indeed. The time slipped by, however; the basaltic craigs of the north-west coast of Skye grew fainter and fainter; and the islands of the ocean, which at first had been scarcely distinguishable on the horizon, had gradually loomed more and more distinct—stretching in one desolate and lonely darkness from the high hills of Lewis, past the faint low-lying flats of Uist, to the dark and rocky shores which fringe the cliffs of Barra. Not once in the long day had the sun actually made his appearance. The atmosphere had been full of a palpitating, silvery light, in which the skies seemed close to the earth, and very grey, and the waves of the sea, where they did not break into white foam, unusually black and threatening. Yet it was "good weather," a safe snug day for sailing, and the sombre colourless tone of all things—sea, far-off land, and sky—was not without its charms for those who have learned to love the pathetic "neutral tint" of the melancholy Scottish coast.

But as evening approached, the sun looked out from a grey chasm above the outlying hills, and shed a lurid light over the dancing sea, illumining to rose-colour the white sails of the little yacht, which was by this time within a few miles of the dangerous coast. Just about this time a weatherbeaten Highlander, who was steering the little vessel,

cocked his eye up to the sunset, and relinquishing the tiller to a young man who sat in the cockpit beside him, said quietly,—

"She's going to give a puff out o' the west yonder, and Loch Uribol's a terrible place for squalls. We'll take off the foresail altogether, and let her go cannie wi' mainsail, staysail, and jib."

Scarcely had the speaker, with the assistance of another man who had been lying listlessly in the fore part of the vessel, carried out his precaution, and taken the foresail down, when the first squall from the land came up white as foam, and laid the vessel over to the coming of the cockpit. Squall after squall followed, while the light from the sunset grew every moment of a more lurid crimson, streaming with the wind out of a great rent in the vast mountains of cloud. The yacht was too lightly ballasted to carry her canvas well, and more than once the wind struck her so savagely as to threaten to founder her outright, the water passing into the cockpit in one green torrent and drenching the helmsman to the skin. The sea was comparatively smooth, however, owing to the shelter of the hills. From the dark precipices and distant misty glens the squalls shot out with a fury only realizable by him who has navigated these coasts in a small vessel. With the fury of hate and the strength of despair, so to speak, they plunged one by one upon the schooner, like wild beasts frantically endeavouring to tear her to pieces.

With a light laugh, the helmsman dashed the wet hair out of his eyes, and strained his gaze towards the land.

"Which is the Uribol land?" he cried to the old Celt who had first spoken. "Can you make out the mouth of the loch?"

The old man shook his head.

"I know fine she lies somewhere in yonder," he said, "but I've never passed the mouth. Luff, sir, luff! We'll put about directly—there's a nasty bit o' water fair ahead."

The young man uttered an exclamation expressive of impatience.

"Here, Calum, take the helm, and let me have a look at the chart."

So saying, he again resigned the tiller to Calum, as the old man was called, and plunging down the companion to the cabin, soon re-emerged with the Government chart of the coast in his hand, spread it out on the "coach-roof," and following the marks with his finger, he studied it attentively, now and then glancing at the land, while the yacht having put about, was dashing along through squall after squall, and coming nearer to the shore.

He was a man of eight or nine and twenty, with a rather handsome

style of face—broad high brow, and nose of the so-called Grecian sort, and a proud sarcastic mouth. His skin was dark and tanned, as if he had lived long in the sun of warmer climates. He was clean shaven, all save the upper lip, where he wore a thick flossy moustache, very fair in colour. His eyes were blue and very large, though he had a habit of contracting them very much when he was looking at any person. In his whole person, and in every gesture, there was a certain air that spoke the gentleman by birth. His expression, nevertheless, was marred by audacity and superciliousness, and his laugh had not the ringing clearness of youth, but sounded hollow at times, with a sort of spasmodic gaiety his face did not share.

As he studied the mysterious lines of the chart, his face grew very black. It was clear that this gentleman, whatever might be his good qualities, possessed a very passionate temper.

"Why on earth did I come here without a pilot?" he exclaimed. "Look here, Calum! the mouth of the loch is full of sunken rocks in every direction. Far out to the right there's Bo Scarbh, a regular reef, three feet under water at high springs; close by—see! there's another, Bo Something Else; and then there's half a dozen rocks peppered *here*, and another half-dozen *there*. To crown all, there's only six feet of low water in the deepest part of the channel, although we are drawing seven feet aft; and, by George! the channel itself is only about two cables' length across. It would be certain shipwreck to enter without a pilot. What are we to do?"

It was in answer to this question that Calum recommended that they should signal to the shore for a pilot; and so the little yacht was kept running to and fro on the wind just off the shore. On coming thus close in under the mountains, they could just distinguish, half a mile ahead, the silvern gleam of the mouth of the loch, and, seen from afar, it looked very narrow indeed—only a few yards across. Just inside, as they knew, there was good anchorage in a small snug basin just opposite the "village."

But an hour of great excitement passed, and there was no answer to their signal from the shore. Every instant the squalls grew more terrific, till it seemed the little vessel must be lost indeed. Worst of all, night was near; the hills were already growing dim.

"It's an awfu' coast," said Calum, reflectively, as he shook the boat through a violent squall. "I mind once of a smack of a hundred tons being clean foundered just off here. And there wasna any sea: she was running for the south with herring, and had twa or three empty barrels

on her deck ; and the wind came aff yonder hill and sank her as ye'd sink a spoon in a bowl o' milk. I wouldna sail an open boat here for a heap o' money."

"No one appears to take any notice of us," cried the young man. "What is to be done? The boat won't stand much more of this."

"The boat's a good boat," said Calum, "but the nicht's going to be bad ; and nae yacht o' this size can live if it comes on a gale. If nae man comes aff from the shore, we'll just have to run for Loch Uish, straicht down the coast. It's no' a cannie run in the dark, for there's the Mackenzie Rock, and the reef where Sandie Gow lost the *Spell* ; and forbye that, there's the Black Rocks ; but we'll dae our best."

"Humph ! then it's only a chance that we get clear out of this confounded mess?"

"O ay, just a chance. The folk'll be awa at the fishing, and it's a bad nicht for a boat like this in the open."

Something in the perfectly unmoved and phlegmatic tone of the speaker took the other's attention, for the young man stared at him for some time with a half comic, half sneering look of astonishment ; and, seeing the grim weatherbeaten features perfectly unmoved, he broke into a hard laugh.

"You take it coolly enough, at any rate," he cried.

"And what for should I no' tak' it coolly? I'm only a common man, and maun tak' the winds as they come, and earn my breed."

"Can you swim?"

"Not a stroke," replied Calum, burying his face in his hands to light his black cutty pipe ; while the man at the fore part of the vessel, reclining against the bitts, hummed in a low voice the doleful-lively ditty of "Gillie Calum."

Still finding secret amusement in the stolidity of his companions, the young man laughed again ; then, entering the cabin once more, he re-emerged with a fowling-piece, and fired two shots rapidly into the air. Scarcely had he done so, when an enormous black dog sprang up the companion, and, rushing to the bulwarks, gazed eagerly out on the waters.

"Down, Nero, down !" cried the young man. "He thinks I have shot something. Ha ! the noise seems to have attracted attention at last. Look yonder !"

On a small eminence overlooking the entrance of the loch two or three figures were now dimly seen ; but it was already too dark to make out

who and what they were. The twilight had quite fallen, and the wind was blowing with great fury.

"Hang off ten minutes longer," the young man said, "and then, if no one comes, we must risk the run down the coast."

The helmsman nodded, "put about" once more, and ran through the wind. The squalls could still be seen whitening the sea to windward when they struck the water; but every minute the coast grew dimmer, so that only a very familiar eye could have made out the landmarks.

Ten minutes passed; and the order was already given to let the vessel run with a free sheet, when Calum, knocking the ashes of his pipe out into the water to leeward, said quietly,—

"Whist a minute! I hear the sound of oars between us and the shore."

Listening intently, all could hear the splash, splash of oars coming nearer and nearer. Immediately afterwards a small boat, rowed by a solitary figure, shot out of the shadow of the hills. It seemed to be a rude coble quite at the mercy of the wind, but very skilfully managed. While Calum brought the boat up to the wind, the young man leant over the side of the vessel and regarded the small boat intently. Presently he uttered an exclamation which bore a suspicious resemblance to an oath, and turned angrily to Calum,—

"Look there! Confound the idiots! They've sent out a *woman*!"

Calum, who was quite as astonished, but exhibited more self-control, nodded sharply. The boat was indeed rowed by a female, to all appearance strong and young, but her head was covered by a dark hood, and they could not see her face.

Angrily enough Calum addressed the stranger in Gaelic. He was answered in clear ringing tones, in the same tongue; and almost before he could say another word the coble was alongside the yacht, and a light girlish figure, with a speed and agility perfectly marvellous to the southerner, had sprung on board.

It was too dark to distinguish her features plainly, but she seemed fair-complexioned and very young. Her hood had fallen back, and her face and hair were damp with spray. Perfectly lost in amazement at so strange an apparition, the young man stood staring open-mouthed, while the stranger and Calum spoke to each other rapidly in Gaelic.

"What does the girl say?" he at last inquired, impatiently. "Is any one coming off to pilot us into the anchorage?"

Calum replied in the methodical way peculiar to him and to his class.

"The lassie says there's not a man in the village this night that can

pull an oar or draw a net. The whole village is awa' after the herring at Loch Uish, and there's naething left but wives, bairns, and old bedrid men."

A furious squall struck the yacht as the fisherman spoke, and almost capsized her, for she had entirely lost way through being brought up to the wind. Again addressing Calum rapidly in Gaelic, the girl pushed him aside and seized the tiller.

"Hallo, what are you doing?" cried the young man. "You're never going to trust the boat to a girl like that!"

The girl seemed either to understand what was said, or guessed at the meaning, for she laughed. By this time the yacht was again running rapidly through the water, steered by the stranger.

"The lassie says," observed Calum, phlegmatically, "that there's nae better pilot in the place than hersel'; and if we leave the boat to her, she'll take us in all snug. The tide's at the flood, she says, and we'll hae plenty o' water at the narrows."

"But it's nearly pitch dark, and this is a mere child."

"Never you fear, sir. See that! She kens how to steer a boat, and take my word for it, she'll take us safe. I've had worse pilots than this before now. She's a bold lass and a cannie, and better than many men."

A loud cry from the girl interrupted him. She seemed giving instructions in her own tongue. In a moment he ran forward to assist the other hand with the sheets, while the girl brought the vessel round just a few feet from a large black mass projecting out of the sea.

"That's close work," cried the gentleman, nervously. "I'm afraid we'll come to grief."

The girl spoke again to Calum, and he interpreted.

"That's Dhu Scur, she says. But there's three fathom water to the very edge of the reef. We're coming up to the narrows now, and need every inch o' room."

Another cry from the girl, and the vessel was round again on another tack. They were now quite in the shadow of the hills, and all seemed darkness and confusion, especially to the unaccustomed senses of the young man. To him the land seemed closing in on every side, the mountains towering straight above, the wind coming in all directions. A wild roar was in the air, and the water seemed swirling and boiling below them with an angry roar.

"We're in the narrows now," cried Calum, "that's the boiling o' the tide."

The wind was sweeping dead out of the mouth of the loch, and again and again the vessel put about, so rapidly, indeed, that she scarcely got way upon her on one tack before she had to come round again. Once, for this reason, she refused altogether to answer the helm in coming round, and seemed drifting right on the rocks of the channel; but in a moment, urged by the girl, Calum boomed out the staysail to windward with an oar, and the vessel slowly completed her swing out. All seemed to grow darker and darker after this, for they got more and more in the shadow of the hills, but by-and-bye the young man saw that they had emerged into mote open water, and that several lights, like those of a village, were glimmering from the darkness of the shore. The wind still shrieked loudly.

"All's safe now, sir," said Calum. "We're close to the anchorage, and out of a' danger."

So saying, he ran forward and assisted his fellow-seaman to haul up the chain on deck, that it might run free, and to hoist the anchor over the bows. A minute afterwards the vessel was brought up to the wind, and glided steadily along through smooth water for about a hundred yards, when the girl cried out to the men forward, and released her hold of the tiller.

The yacht was quite stationary. Down went the anchor, with that delicious sound which only the weary cruiser knows and loves. For some minutes there was confusion in the darkness. The young man went forward to see all snug, and to take a look about him. So far as he could make out in the night, they were in a nice natural harbour, surrounded on every side by hills, and sheltered almost entirely from the wind then blowing.

"Five fathom water," said Calum, hauling in the lead-line; "and a fine soft mud for the bottom. We couldna be in a snugger berth."

The young man, who had been plunged in deep reflection, touched him on the shoulder.

"Come aft with me and speak to the girl. In all probability she has saved our lives."

But when they went in search of her she had disappeared, and the old coble in which she had rowed out to their assistance had disappeared also. They strained their eyes into the surrounding darkness, and listened for the sound of oars; but all was quite still, and they could not see a glimpse of the stranger.

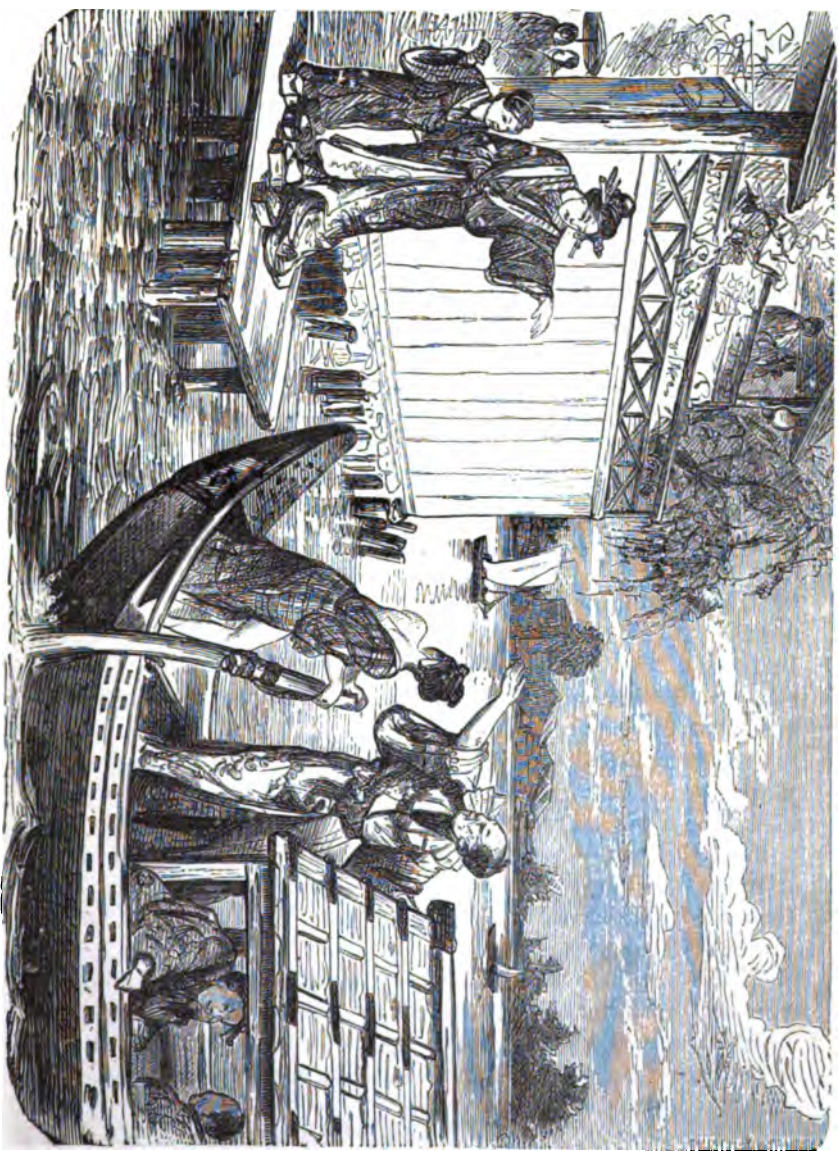
IN JAPAN.

IT is not until you approach a landing-place in Japan that you realize that you are in a strange, topsyturvy country, where the people—however clever and civilized—seem to do everything in a different way from that of Europeans. They have habits and customs in the “Land of the Rising Sun” very unlike those of our own country, where it sets.

When you anchor in the bay, you see, perhaps, many junks, with their lofty poops, carven prows, and curious sails. But you have met many of these in the Chinese seas, and they are nothing new. The scenery, too, is disappointing. Land and sea are much the same all over the world, and travellers are always disappointed with a famous bay, unless it be such a one as that of Rio Janeiro, where nature seems to have forgotten all her laws, and taken to playing tricks with the mountains.

But let us row ashore, and a surprise meets us at every step. Even before we land, strange things are seen. Our way may be up a canal, past numerous ferries, and estuaries, and little islands. On these islands are built many houses; sometimes a house occupying a whole island, so that it seems to be built in the water. When this is deep, the inhabitants cross in a ferry-boat—a long flat-bottomed vessel, with high curved prow and stern. But when the water, as is generally the case, is shallower, they have more curious modes of getting along. There are palanquins or simple chairs upon open platforms, carried by poles upon the shoulders of sturdy porters, who wade about often breast-deep in the water. These ply for hire just as cabs do with us, and at a busy time of the day one sees a ferry or water suburb crowded with ladies and gentlemen paying visits or going to shop, each perched upon a little board, borne about thus above the water. The poorer people, who cannot afford such a luxury, have more primitive modes of getting along. They lash four tubs to two cross-poles, and getting into the tubs, scull themselves along.

Jumping out of the boat, the first thing that strikes us is the people. They have a look of such quaint intelligence, you could quite believe they lived before the Flood, or that you had stepped across to another planet. They have their own peculiar ways, and very peculiar they are. We have plenty of Japanese in England now, and dressed as Englishmen they hardly attract attention. So it is not so much their personal appearance, though I was struck with their uniform shortness, perhaps because



“When the water is deep, the inhabitants cross in a ferry-boat.”

I am rather tall myself. I am told that the average height of the men is only 5 feet 1 inch, and of the women about 10 inches less.

The dress is certainly picturesque, or rather was, for I am told that since they have had railways and telegraphs and other European inventions, the Japanese, in the open towns at least, have adopted largely the European dress as well. But when I was in Japan such a thing was unthought of. Both men and women are dressed in a loose robe, rather looser for the women than for the men. That of the latter is confined by a belt; of the former, by a broad girdle, called *obi*, tied in a large bow. This bow is behind, unless the lady is a widow resolved not to marry again, when it is in front.

The men have the front of the head shaven, the remainder of the hair is allowed to grow long and fastened in a knot upon the crown. The women stick their knots of hair full of long pins having at the ends hollow glass balls filled with coloured liquids. These are their chief ornaments; for though they have many precious stones, they do not know how to cut them, and so do not value them. But glass is scarce and dear.

In the breast of their robe, or the pockets in their sleeves, are bundles of paper. One bundle is the bearer's pocket-handkerchief, the others are for writing on. Their writing utensils are carried from the girdle along with a pipe and tobacco-pouch. I should say painting rather than writing materials, for they do not use pens, but a fine paint brush and a stick of Indian ink. These are not for mere show, for the Japanese are great writers, and you see every one in the street making notes of everything continually.

On their feet they wear thick sandals made of straw, kept on by a strap passing between the great and second toes. Thus they have to shuffle along, but they get very clever at it by practice, and their gait is by no means so ugly as you would imagine. The horses are also shod with straw shoes, which last, of course, but two or three hours, and are continually changed, so that the streets are covered with torn straw shoes or man and horse.

This universal walking on straw, together with the fact that there are no carts or carriages—only pack-horses and oxen—makes the streets wonderfully quiet, giving the scene an air of absurd solemnity that looks quite like a play. But sometimes a more notable individual divides the crowd, and attracts a stranger's eye.

Here is a *Daimio*, or some high official, going to Court. He wears a stiff and voluminous silk dress, with sword and fan, and a curiously-

shaped cap, which is best explained by the picture. An attendant holds a parasol over his head, while others call on the crowd to make way or even to bow down before their master.

Here comes a little nobleman of three years old toddling along with



"Here is a high official going to Court."

his nurse's hand. He is too small to carry a sword, so a servant walks behind and carries it for him.

Next comes a street barber. Over his shoulder he carries a pole. From one end hangs a stool, from the other a box with his shaving utensils. When a customer is found, down he squats in the street, there to be shaven and have his top-knot arranged.

Following the barber are a couple of laughing *moosmies*, or young girls. They are pretty enough to attract attention, for most of the women have struck you as being very ugly. Indeed, when a girl becomes a woman



"Next comes a street barber."

she rapidly loses her beauty ; and when she marries she destroys it altogether, for she plucks out her eyebrows and stains her teeth black. But the *moosmies* are merry, pretty, laughing little flirts.

Behind them comes a doctor, with his attendant bearing his instruments and medicines, and at his back a solemn *Bonze*, or priest, with his

head completely shaven. He has just stepped out of an avenue which ends in two pillars, leaning towards each other, and joined at the top by two cross-bars. This is a *Tori*, or sacred gate, and marks a temple and idol. The idol is a huge ugly lump of stone or wood, stuck over with little pellets of paper. These you see the passers-by take out of their mouths and throw at the idol as they go on their way. These are their prayers, which, written on the chewed paper, they choose in this curious fashion to present to their deity.

Having looked at the people, we turn to look at the houses. They are as curious as those who live in them, and are more like toy houses than anything else. They are built of wood and roofed with wooden tiles. On the roof is stuck a first storey, often fantastically ornamented. Above this is a large tub, wrapped round with straw, and kept full of water in case of fires—which are numerous, and in wooden towns destructive. All about the streets you see vessels full of water, fire-engines, and watchmen to give the alarm.

The houses are built with the gable-ends to the street, after the fashion of so many fishing villages in Scotland. The roof projects, forming a covered walk round, and in a prominent place is fixed a charm, a paper covered with curious marks or some mystical writing. The most striking thing about them at first is that they appear either to have no doors or windows, or to have no walls. But you soon see the explanation. The walls and partitions are mere wooden screens, sliding in grooves, so that the whole side of a house can be slid off, leaving only the framework. This the shopkeepers do, leaving their goods all exposed in front, and sitting in their houses behind. If it is required to admit the light without such a public exposure—though the Japanese care little about publicity—windows of paper are put in, and screens of the same substance are generally used for the internal divisions of the houses.

There are no chairs in the shop. The shopkeeper squats on the ground behind, and the customer squats down before him; both bow and say, "*He, He, He*," which is a peculiar sound made by drawing in the breath, expressive of admiration and respect. Then they begin to make a bargain, or if one of the parties be English, "a pigeon." The seller always asks double his price, and the customer always offers half what he intends giving; so the bargains are often long affairs.

Sometimes the visitor is not a customer, but a friend, for this people are great visitors and observers of etiquette. If it be a lady, she will be introduced to the host's wife. I was much amused the first day I went

ashore to see a grave old gentleman lead a lively young lady thus to an inner partition, and pulling it aside, discover his wife at her *siesta*, which she took lying on the floor, with a wooden pillow, and a sheet of paper



"She took her *siesta* lying on the floor, with a wooden pillow."

over her face, showing only her blackened teeth through her partially opened lips.

Not only do they indulge in the *siesta* in this fashion, but they sleep so all night ; for in all their houses there is not a bed, chair, or table.

The floors are covered with soft white woollen mats, each six feet by three, and four inches thick. On these they lie down to sleep without undressing. On these they sit—the commoner people squatting on their haunches, the more aristocratic sitting on their heels. How they manage at dinner-time we shall see when we go to tea with some friends. Thus they have absolutely no furniture, which makes a fire not of so much importance when it does come. It also allows the children to roll and romp about as they please, there being nothing to pull over or break ; while there is no fear of falling into the fire, the only one being made of charcoal in the centre of the kitchen. Indeed, the children have a good time of it, never being whipped or punished, and always having their own way, for Japanese parents spend their whole lives in trying to please their children.

Whatever the Japanese do, that can so be done, is performed without chair, table, or stool. In workshop and house the inhabitants are discovered at their daily tasks in every variety of attitude. Here is a shoe-maker, or rather sandal-maker, sitting on his floor like a tailor on his board. Next door is a seed-shop. The seed is sold in paper bags, each bag ornamented with a bright-coloured picture. These pictures are being painted by a young woman lying on her face on the shop floor. Lying on the face is indeed the universal indoor attitude while writing or reading.

Next to the seed-shop is a clothes-shop ; and in the back part of the house the women folk can be seen at a curious operation round a machine like one of the chestnut-roasters at our street corners. But, on asking, we find the chestnuts are silk cocoons and that the women are spinning raw silk. The cocoons are placed in a vessel, as you see, above a charcoal fire. The vessel is filled with water, thus kept hot, which dissolves the sticky substance that hardens the silk into a shell. The spinner, taking from three to thirty of the ends, twists them together, and fastens them to the spindle, on which they are wound in a single thread. This is raw floss silk, which, however, goes through many processes before appearing as a silk dress. The woman on the right is examining the bundles of bamboo straw on which the silkworms are placed to lay their eggs or spin their cocoons, while her friend behind is giving the daily supply of mulberry-leaves.

But we are interrupted by an unwonted noise and clatter in the streets. It is a company of jugglers, of whose exhibitions the natives are passionately fond. With them is a man in a hideous mask beating a drum, while another rings a bell and asks for subscriptions. Then you see the usual feats of balancing, sword-swallowing, knife-throwing, top-spinning, with



Street Jugglers.

which you are familiar, for doubtless many of you have laughed at the clever tricks of little "All Right," and his friends. Perhaps the prettiest trick is the butterfly one ; it seems tolerably difficult too, until you know how it is done. When the performer makes the butterfly, he twists into it two long hairs. The other end of the first hair he fastens to his head, that of the second to his fan. Thus with a little practice he can make the paper butterfly do anything he pleases.

Great jugglers will sometimes, before the Court or at great festivals, do most extraordinary things. I had not an opportunity of seeing such, but may quote you an account written by one who had :—

"One of the gang took a ball of cord, and, grasping one end of the cord in his hand, slung the other up into the air with such force that its extremity was beyond reach of our sight. He then immediately climbed up the cord with indescribable quickness, and got so high that we could no longer see him. Then lo ! a leg came tumbling down out of the air. A moment later a hand came down, and immediately on that another leg. And in short all the members of the body came thus successively tumbling from the air and were cast together into a basket. The last fragment of all that we saw tumble down was the head, and no sooner had that touched the ground than he who had put the limbs into the basket turned them all out again topsy-turvey. Then straightway we saw all those limbs creep together again and form a whole man, who at once could go and stand just as before without showing the least damage."

Another favourite Japanese exhibition is that of wrestling. The royal wrestlers are well taken care of and hold their heads very high. These men are of great size and enormous development of muscle, capable of surprising feats of strength and surpassing endurance. The royal wrestlers performed once before an United States commodore, who tells us that two came into the ring and took up positions a few yards from each other. "They crouched for a while with a wary look, as if each were watching to catch his antagonist off his guard. They were like a pair of fierce bulls, whose nature they had not only acquired, but even their look and movement. They stamped the ground, pawing, as it were, with impatience; they grasped handfuls of dirt, and flung it with an angry toss over their backs, or rubbed it impatiently between their giant palms. They now crouched low, until in an instant they had simultaneously heaved their massive forms in opposing force, body to body, with a shock that might have stunned an ox."



Silk-spinning.

After one had been thrown, another pair gave a different exhibition of brute force. "One having taken his place in the ring assumed an attitude of defence, with one leg in advance as if to steady himself, and his bent body, with his head lowered, placed in a position as if to receive an attack. Immediately after, in rushed the other, bellowing loudly like a bull, and, making at once for the man in the ring, dashed, with his head lowered and thrust forward, against the head of his opponent, who bore the shock with the steadiness of a rock, although the blood streamed down his face from his bruised forehead. This manœuvre was repeated again and again; and thus they kept up their brutal contest until their foreheads were besmeared with blood, and the flesh on their chests rose in great swollen tumours from the repeated blows."

As may be supposed from their fondness for such exhibitions, the Japanese are great theatre-goers. Every town has a great many theatres, which often keep open all day, sometimes one play occupying the whole time. But that does not matter to the play-goers, for the family attend *en masse*, and take their dinner and other meals during the performance. Round the house are two galleries for the upper classes. The pit is lower than the stage, and crossed by raised planks on a level with the latter. Thus it looks like a chess-board, each square being a well holding ten or a dozen spectators, who sit there on their mats. Sometimes a well is taken by a family, as a box by us. On the raised walks pass the attendants who sell refreshments, and the actors, not on the stage, who point out to the spectators the noticeable features of the play. The house is always good-humoured, and frequently carries on a conversation with the speakers. The actors are all male—except in the ballets, where female dancers appear. After the first five minutes the whole thing becomes very dull to a European, even though he understands the language. The only thing we found to laugh at was the principal actor, who came on the stage with two attendants bearing candles to show him off. These candles were successively held to whatever part of him deserved attention, his dress, face, position of his hands, and so on.

Leaving the theatre, which is brilliantly illuminated outside, and before which the proprietor praises his performance, calling on the public to "Walk up! Walk up!" we finished our tour by taking afternoon tea with a friendly native. Indeed, whenever you call, morning, afternoon, or night, you are offered tea; for the kettle is always kept boiling on the kitchen fire.

Entering, we find the lady of the house and two pretty *moosmies*, her daughters. We salute each other with "He, he, he," and squat down.

While the attendants bring in the repast, for we are evidently to have more than tea, the ladies sing and play upon a sort of banjo; the music is low and plaintive, very peculiar and uninteresting. The most amusing thing about it is, that the singer sways her body about, keeping time with



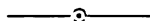
Afternoon Tea.

the air, and makes faces to represent the words. These grimaces are often very grotesque, and you wonder how two such pretty faces can be twisted into such hideous shapes.

But now the feast is ready. There is no table. Before every one is

placed a small stool, about a foot square and eight inches high. On this are set the cups and dishes for each. These are made of japanned ware, and their number and beauty mark the wealth and importance of the host. Having no furniture, the gentlemen of Japan lay out their money and show their taste in their table equipage. The tea is very weak and colourless, and one would require some time, I fancy, to like it; for it is made and drank as we do cocoa. The leaf is ground to a powder and swallowed with the infusion. The substantials of the meal are rice and fish, eaten with chopsticks; and the adjuncts, innumerable little dainties, from pickled sea-weed to preserved fruit, from fried dog to poached birds' nests. The Japanese in fact eat everything; but, happily for the stranger, being good cooks, disguise everything so, that he may partake with impunity.

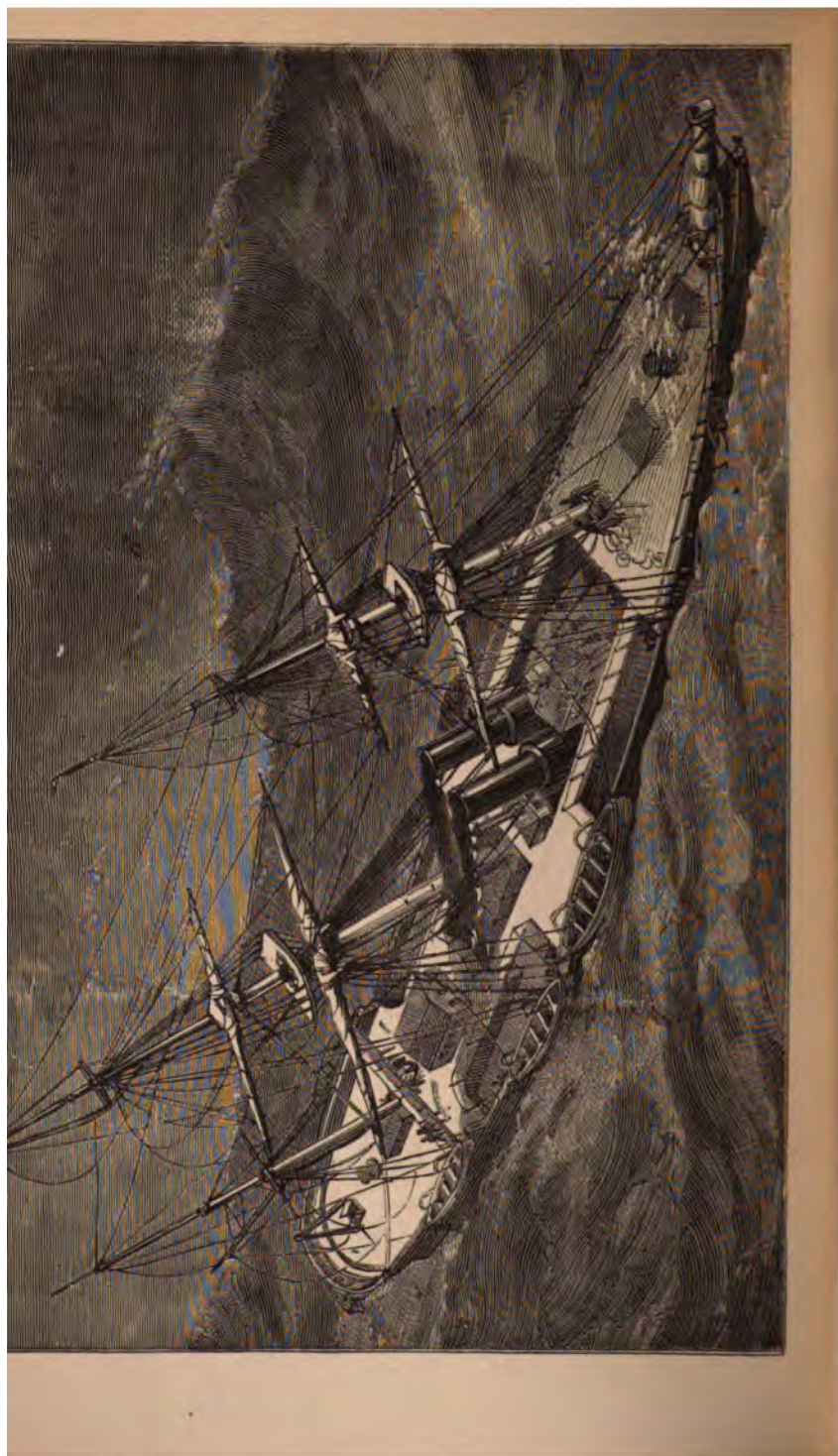
Being soon tired of sitting on our heels—though the natives will do so for hours at a time—we made our adieux, and, bowing our way out, put on our shoes, which we have left, as the natives their sandals, at the door, and so made our way back to the ship.



SPRING GALES.

AN OLD SAILOR'S TALK.

“YES, my boy, 't is a sad thing, that loss o' the '*Rydicc*. It's plain she'd too much canvas on her, but who's to blame for not taking it off of her in time, who's to say, or whether there was any one to blame? You see there's a temptation to carry on as long as ever you can aboard a man-of-war—there's so many to do the work, and they're so spry at it, for the most part. It's different aboard a good many merchantmen: not half enough hands, and them getting in one another's way. I remember a blowy spring, though 't was autumn there, just ten years ago. I was afloat then, in the South American trade. The *Phæbe*, a British bark, was the craft I had shipped in at Valparaiso, and we were coming round with a cargo of copper and hides. No, not through the Straits of Magellan; round the Horn we came. For a wonder, off Staten Island there was scarce a cloud in the sky, and the sea was smooth; and then,



all of a sudden, the wind rushed out howling, and black clouds blotted out the sky as if it had been smudged with ink, and there was a frightful sea on. She almost dipped her yard-arms into the water when she rolled. It was next to impossible to keep your feet, and down smashed a block and killed the carpenter's mate, poor fellow. Days and days of such weather we had, often driving under bare poles.

"We'd all sorts in our crew. Some of them were blacks, and they'd brought the scurvy on board with them; so we were soon short-handed. Every day we had snow, and sleet, and hail, and we were for ever shipping seas. Down into the forecastle they'd come with a thud, so that we hadn't a dry thread anywhere. It was very little sail we ventured to carry. Our fore-topsail was split directly it was set. It had been frozen, you see, and cracked like glass, and then flew away in smithereens. Frightful frost we had; icicles pretty nigh a yard long on the gallows, and running rigging all jammed. Some of the fellows got their fingers frost-bitten. We were under double-reefed courses and main-topsail when the topsail-yard snapped, and away flew the sail like a flock of sea-gulls. Then we'd to lie to again.

"It was two days before we got a new yard rigged. That day two of our poor fellows were washed overboard. You couldn't hear 'em, but you could see them shrieking before they went under, poor fellows. It's strange that sailors don't think more of their latter end, when it's so nigh them every minute they're afloat. Next, from the strain the mast had got, we found that one of the main-shrouds had parted, and, when we'd spliced it, the main-yard broke in the slings. We were for ever carrying away something or other.

"Poor old Chips had a hard time of it now that his mate was gone; but he never grumbled. He was a real religious old chap. I've sailed with him in more ships than one, and I never knew him get drunk or say a bad word.

"Soon we'd another gale—a downright hurricane. Fore-topsail and main-topsail both blew away, and the mainsail broke loose and flapped about like a fury. The mate was knocked down, and got his cheek cut open.

"No, we didn't carry a doctor. Cuts and the like of that sailors can doctor for themselves, and the old man had got a medicine-chest. It wasn't much use to them that had the scurvy. They lost heart, and began to die. To be sure, they were only blacks, but it was dreary work sewing them up and pitching them overboard.

"No, we couldn't have service, but that don't matter in God's sight, I reckon. Then there came a storm worse than ever. The weather rigging—a lot of it—snapped like harp-strings, and the cargo shifted. The ship lay over so that I thought we should have gone down at once, but then the masts went by the board, and when we'd cut them away, she gave a heel over to starboard, and then she righted. But when the pumps were sounded, we found that she was making water at a rare rate, and night and day we had to pump to keep her afloat. We tried to set up some jury-rigging, but it was no good. The rudder was carried away, and we were just a log, for the wind and the water would soon have us to itself. We had pumped until we had pretty nigh worked the pumps out, and yet the water had kept gaining on us.

"The blacks were dying fast now, and two or three of the whites were bad with scurvy, too. 'T was precious little nursing they got, poor chaps. The corpses used to lie washing about until somebody could find a minute to throw them overboard. And then some of those who had kept well vowed they would work no longer, and got to the spirits, for all the skipper and the first mate could do to stop them. The second mate and boatswain were as bad as any. When they were downright mad with drink, they launched two boats, and the lot of them went to the bottom almost as soon as the boats were off the davits. The captain, the mate, me, and a Dutchman, were the only able-bodied men left on board the vessel—there were some half-dozen sick men in their berths. 'T would soon be up with all of us, I thought, as she settled more and more in the water. 'T was no good to launch a boat. We'd none left that would live in such a sea. So there we had to stay till we should sink.

"I thought a good bit about my past life then, young gentlemen, and what's to come after. It's a solemn thing to sit waiting like that, with Death opposite, staring right into your eyes, waiting for the clock to strike like. At last we sighted the smoke of a steamer—a Liverpool liner. But the *Phæbe* had gone down before she overhauled us, and I was the only one the boat she sent picked up."

UNDER THE NORTH STAR.

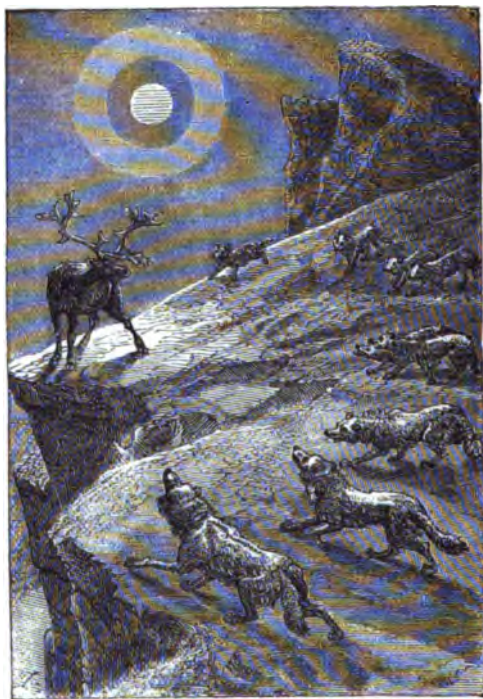
UP where the world grows cold,
Under the sharp North Star,
The wrinkled ice is very old,
And the life of man is far ;
None to see when the fog falls white,
And none to shiver and hear
How wild the bears are in the night,
Which lasts for half a year !

The wind may blow as it will,
But it cannot shake a tree,
Nor stir the waves which lie so still
On the corpse of that dead sea !
The sun comes out over flowerless strands,
Where only icy tears flow,
Where the North weeps for sweet woodlands
Which she must never know.

Earth speaks with awful lips,
"No place for man is here !
Between my bergs I'll crush your ships,
If you will come too near ;
You shall be slain by bitter wind,
Or starved on barren shore,
My cruel snow shall strike you blind ;
Go,—trouble me no more !"

But British men are fain
To venture on and through,
And when you tell them to refrain,
They set themselves to do ;
Into the secrets of the snow
They hurry and they press,
And answer Nature's coldest "No,"
With a great shout of "Yes."

It was a little band
Went on that dangerous track,
To do a message from our land,
And to bring an answer back ;



The frost had bound their good ship tight,
And years were come and gone,
When a few brave hearts, as best they might
Went over the shores alone.

And as one strode so bold,
He saw a sight of fear,—
Nine white wolves came over the wold,
And they were watching a deer ;

By three and by two and by one,
 A cunning half-moon they made,
 They glanced at each other and did not run,
 But crept like creatures afraid.

They knew what they were about,
 And the poor thing knew it too,—
 It turned its head like a child in doubt,
 And shrank, and backward drew;
 But whether it looked to left or right,
 It met a savage eye,
 And the man stood still and saw the sight,
 And felt that it must die.

Backward, trembling and fast,
 And onward, crafty and slow,
 And over the cliff's sheer edge at last,
 And crash on the ice below;
 But then with a whirl and a plunge and a whoop,
 The wolves are down the hill,
 They break their ranks, that wild white troop,
 When it is time to kill.

And days and nights went past,
 And the men grew weary and pale,
 Scanty food and freezing blast,
 And hearts beginning to fail!
 The wanderer knew his steps were slow,
 And his eyes were languid and dim,
 When nine white wolves came over the snow,
 And they were watching—him.

He saw them gather and glance,
 And he remembered the deer,
 He saw them frame their cunning advance,
 And he felt a little fear!
 But never a hair's-breadth did he swerve,
 Nor lower his looks a whit,
 He faced the cruel scimitar-curve,
 And then walked up to it.

There is never a beast so strong
 As to bear a brave man's eye !
 They crouched ; they looked as if nothing was wrong ;
 And then they turned to fly.
 The man stood still and drew his breath,
 When he saw the scattering ranks ;
 He had been face to face with death :
 I hope he uttered thanks.

There's a fireside far away,
 A little anxious now,
 Where a man shall sit one joyful day,
 And tell of the world of snow ;
 And tell of the wolves who sup so grim,
 And leave no bone behind ;
 And how they meant to sup on him,
 But looked and changed their mind !



AT DEAL.

BOYS who begin "*Cæsar*" at *Omnis Gallia*, etc., must, I think, find him very dry ; but those who have been fortunate enough to be put on first in the Fourth Book of the Commentaries can scarcely help feeling interested in the account of the invasion of Britain.

About midnight Cæsar weighed anchor, and by ten next morning he had crossed the Channel, and found the ancient Britons in their war-paint posted on the cliffs. The beach there being commanded by the men above it, who could have rained down a shower of weapons on a force that attempted to land, Cæsar lay at anchor off the shore until three in the afternoon, waiting for those of his vessels that had lagged behind to arrive. Then, wind and tide both serving, he weighed again, and sailed for about seven miles along the coast, the Britons closely following him up. Having found an open and level beach, he again anchored ; but his men, when ordered to land, hung back somewhat from leaping into deep heaving water, and forcing their way through the storm of darts which the

Britons sent whizzing at them from the shore, some of the savages running into the water to meet them.

Accordingly, Cæsar sent his long ships, impelled by oars—steam-frigates, as we should say—to play on the flank of the enemy. These vessels and their artillery of catapults, etc., startled the Britons a good deal more than the transports had done, and they fell back a little.

The Roman soldiers still shrinking from a plunge into the troubled sea, the standard-bearer of the Tenth Legion, after a short prayer, shouted, "Leap, men, unless you wish to betray the eagle to the enemy!" And in he went with it, and began to struggle his way to the shore. After him, from one vessel after another, in plunged the soldiers, and after a fierce fight, in which the boats of the men-of-war and the scouting craft took part, the Romans forced their way to land, formed, charged, and the enemy fled.

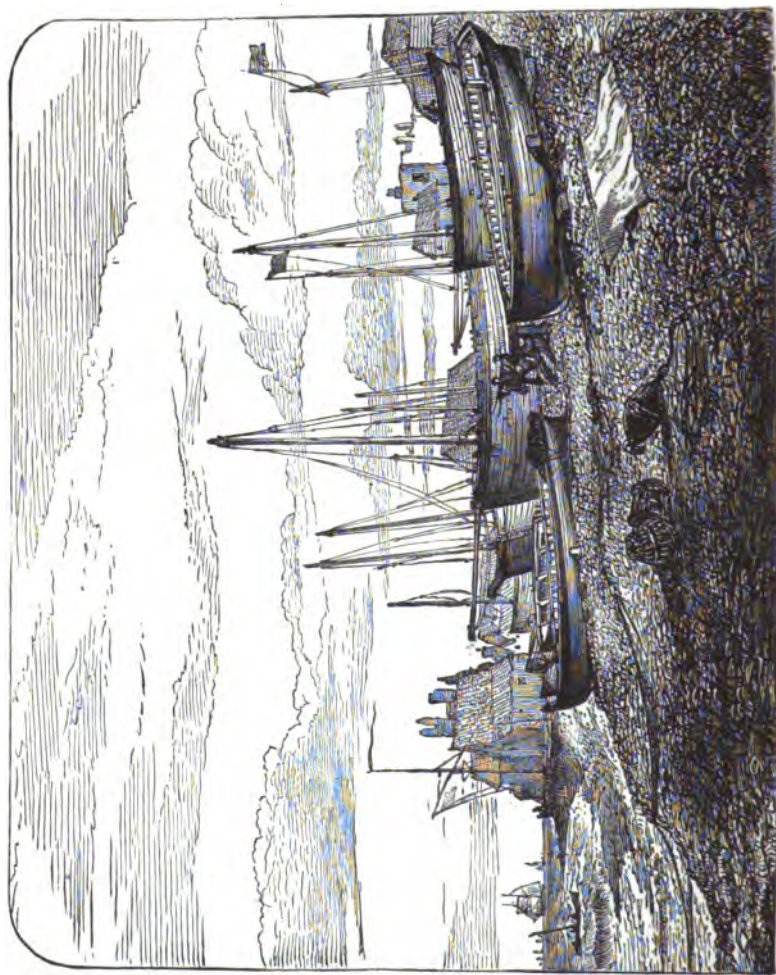
Well, many learned men say that it was at Kingsdown, near Deal, that Cæsar landed. At present Kingsdown is chiefly famous for its fishermen, but there are remains of an old camp there, which used to be called the "Roman Codde."

At Sandwich, near Deal, Canute first landed. This old-fashioned town, with houses "like places in a picture," is called the principal Cinque Port, and so its mayor carries, or used to carry, a black knotted staff, the mayors of the others carrying white ones; but the sand has filled up its harbour, and it is a queer port of any kind now. It is, however, as I have hinted, a very interesting old place. I have not time or space to write its history, but I can tell you some stories about it.

Because Canute had got the worst in a fight in Lincolnshire, he came to Sandwich and cut off the hands and feet of his hostages. Afterwards, to make amends, he finished building the town, and gave it to Christ Church, Canterbury, with a rich pall, a golden crown, and the haven, with the royalty of the water on each side so far as a man on board a vessel afloat in the full sea could fling a short hatchet to the land. In 1064 it yielded the Canterbury monks 40,000 herrings for their apparel. Of course I do not mean that they dressed up in the scales like harlequins.

It was at Sandwich Cœur de Lion landed after his imprisonment, and from it he walked to Canterbury to give thanks to God and St. Thomas for his liberty.

They had some queer punishments at Sandwich. Besides beheading and hanging felons, the Sandwich people drowned them and buried them alive. If a thief banished for life came back, he had his ear fas-



Deal—The Beach and Boats.

tened to a cart-wheel with a fourpenny nail. A woman for some offence was carried round the town by two porters, and then banished, with notice that if she returned she would be burnt in the cheek. Another woman, who had abused the mayor, was sentenced to go round the town with a mortar borne before her; but her husband paid a fine of 1s. 6d., and got her off.

The punishment for striking a jurat was banishment, and if the culprit returned within a year and a day, his hand was to be cut off. In 1522 a person was condemned to be put in the pillory with his ear nailed to it until he could tear it free; then he was to be banished. The same punishment was inflicted on a man who spoke disrespectfully of Anne Boleyn.

In 1539 a person was flogged and banished for stealing a pair of ducks and a goose. A confederate was likewise flogged. Another was pilloried with the stolen property hanging from her neck. The person in whose house the goose and ducks had been roasted was pilloried, and no longer allowed to be a licensed victualler.

In 1550 a man who had said that the late king was a heretic was pilloried, and had both his ears cut off. Three years afterwards the parson of St. Peter's was confined to his parsonage for saying evensong in English. In 1639 a woman was hanged for witchcraft, and another in 1644.

Scolds, whose husbands would not pay 1s. 9d. to commute the punishment, had to carry the mortar, whatever that may have been, from and to Pillory Gate; a minstrel, to whom they were compelled to pay a penny for his pains, going before them to make sport.

According to another explanation, the mayor of Sandwich bears a black wand because in 1456 the Steward of Normandy landed at Sandwich, burnt the town to ashes, and put the inhabitants, mayor and officers included, to the sword.

When Henry VIII. was expected at Sandwich, the bridge at Sandown Gate was repaired for him to pass over (this really looks very much like poking fun at his corpulence); and for him and his train there were prepared, at a cost of twenty marks, four fat oxen, twenty fat wethers, and forty fat capons.

On April 6th, 1580, there was a great earthquake which made the ships in Sandwich harbour "totter." In 1582 three hundred and a half of Dutch Protestants, practising some sixty trades, settled at Sandwich. The neighbourhood is still famous for the vegetables the culture of which

they introduced. One of the Sandwich hospitals is St. John's, founded for the relief of distressed and infirm travellers, who were supplied with clothes and bedding, and if they died in the hospital, were buried at its expense. Some of the brethren begged alms in the town to buy meat for the travellers' Sunday dinner; another begged fish from the fishermen; another, mounted on a donkey, went about through the country begging, and sometimes brought back thirteen and fourpence, or ten shillings clear. All fish and flesh forfeited in Sandwich went to the hospital, all hogs straying in the streets, and all fowl found swimming on the Delph.

In olden times the common serjeant had to see that, in hot weather, every householder in the town kept a tub of water at his door in readiness for fires. This officer was ordered to carry a switch, "by which he might be known," and also with which, probably, he might scourge saucy little boys.

Off the North Foreland, nearly seven hundred years ago, England fought her first great naval fight with France. The odds were greatly in favour of the Frenchmen, but the Englishmen laid their ships alongside the French, boarded them, cut away their rigging, and gained a complete victory. From Deal the Cinque Ports fleet sailed to the siege of Calais. Hard by, Perkin Warbeck landed, but was driven back by the Sandwich men. Past Deal swept the Spanish Armada, and off Deal afterwards the Dutch and English had their tough sea wrestles. The Downs have been crowded with vessels waiting for convoy as now they do for a wind. Not so very long ago Deal houses had back doors opening on the beach for the convenience of smugglers.

The Downs are roads running from the North to the South Foreland, formed by the sheltering breakwater of the Goodwin Sands. According to tradition they were once an island belonging to Earl Godwin, King Harold's father; Lom-*ea*, like Mers-*ea*, farther up the coast. According to an old man, who, to prove his wisdom, kept on repeating that he *was* an old man, they were caused by the building of Tenterden steeple. Although a shelter to vessels inside them, they have wrecked a frightful number of the craft that have got on them, calling forth both the greed and the heroic generosity of the Deal and other Downs boatmen. In a single storm last century thirteen men-of-war were lost upon the Goodwins. They have swallowed the crunched bones of many a fine merchantman also. They have even wrecked their beacons. Red light-ships, with balls at their mast-heads, warn vessels off their perilous edges. During bleak, black, roaring nights I often think of the brave fellows

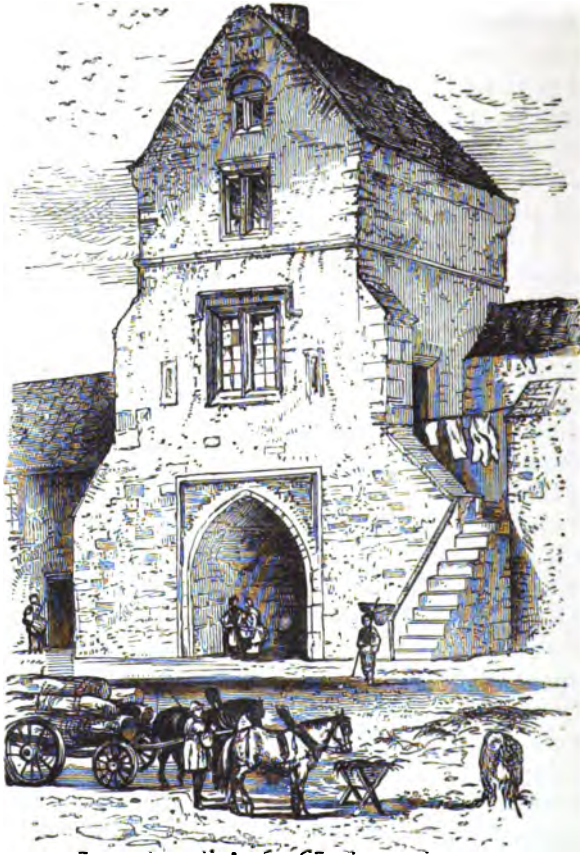
who man the lonely lightships moored about the Goodwins. Brave fellows, too, are the Cinque Port pilots, who put off from Deal and elsewhere to guide vessels past their dangers.

Deal pilots are always on the look-out on shore, and cruising about at sea for craft. There are always other salts on the look-out at Deal—the boatmen, who sometimes go fishing, but who make a good deal more as hobbler or salvors than they do, as a rule, by the sale of their sprats, herrings, mackerel, plaice, skate, cod, whiting, or soles. Is a vessel dragging her anchor? Has her cable parted? Is she in distress of any kind? Off to her, in their oilskins and tarpaulins, they will fly, in any weather, in their tarry craft; and if they do charge rather high for their perilous services, it can scarcely be wondered at. Moreover, there are no bolder lifeboat crews, who can only obtain the Association's pay, than those made up of Downs boatmen. Deal, including Walmer and Kingsdown, has three fine lifeboats "ready, aye ready."

Everywhere, figuratively as well as literally, there is salt in the air of Deal. One of its churches has a gallery built by the Deal pilots, with a painting of a man-of-war in front. In the graveyard of this church there is an Elizabethan tomb built for the family of Admiral Drake, and hard by a navy gunner is buried. In the burial-ground of the Congregational Chapel, which dates from the reign of Charles II., there is a monument of William Boys, Lieutenant-Governor of Greenwich Hospital. When second mate of the merchant ship *Luxembourg* he had a wonderful escape. The vessel having caught fire on her voyage home from Jamaica, the crew, twenty-four all told, lowered the yawl, and for nearly a fortnight floated about at sea without mast or sail, chart or compass, food or drink. When the boat was picked up by a fishing-vessel on the Newfoundland banks, of the twenty-four only seven were living. Mr. Boys, being one of these, to the end of his life made a religious anniversary of those dreadful days he had passed at sea. When he obtained a commission in the Royal Navy he took for his device a ship on fire, and for his motto, "From fire, water, and famine, by Providence preserved."

In the chancel of St. George's Church there is a tablet raised by William IV. to the memory of his shipmate, Commander David Ross. And here are some other memorials of seamen in St. George's and its churchyard: "In the memory of David Browne, late seaman on board H.M.S. *Immortalité*, who died of wounds received in action with a division of the French flotilla off Blancnez, on the coast of France, the 23rd October, 1804. Likewise of James Wilson, William Tenent, John Dowell, and George

Bacher (seamen), who lost their lives on the same occasion ; of William Panrucker, seaman, killed 6th September, 1804 ; John, Egerton, marine, killed 17th February, 1804 ; and of James Ridout, seaman, killed 6th



November, 1805. This is erected by their shipmates. They were brave, good men, and fell at that post their country had assigned them."

Their shipmates bear a similar testimony to "John Ross and James Draper, seamen, who were killed on board H.M.S. *Naiad* in defeating the French flotilla off Boulogne, in the presence of Buonaparte, 21st September, 1811."

In 1788 a midshipman belonging to the *Dublin*, Indiaman, was drowned

off Deal. His body was washed ashore, and for three weeks remained hidden in the sand-hills. It now lies buried in St. George's churchyard beneath this inscription, the prose of which is more satisfactory than the verse: "He has left a disconsolate mother to mourn the loss of a dutiful son."

"Mother, weep not your son's untimely fate,
The youth you fondly embraced so late,
Who now reclined in earth's cold bosom lies,
In hopes through Jesus Christ with you to rise."

Lord Nelson and a vast throng attended the funeral of the officer thus commemorated:—

"The remains of Capt. Edward Thornborough Parker, of the Royal Navy, are here interred: wounded 15th August, 1801, off Boulogne, and on the 27th September following terminated his career of glory in the twenty-third year of his age."

Two more such inscriptions will suffice.

"A tribute to the skill and determined courage of the boatmen of Deal. And in memory of

GEORGE PHILPOTT,
who died March 22nd, 1818, aged 74 years.

Full many lives he saved,
With his undaunted crew;
He put his trust in Providence,
And cared not how it blew."

"William Follett, aged 23, master of the schooner *Tryphina*, of Dartmouth, wrecked on the Goodwin Sands on the night of the 11th December, 1827, when he and five more were drowned."

This part of the world used to boast of three castles, all erected in Henry VIII.'s time. Sandown Castle, in which Colonel Hutchinson, of Stuart times celebrity, was imprisoned, was pulled down some years back for "building materials." Deal Castle, whose stout walls shook like aspen leaves in the earthquake of 1692, had for its governor for several years a stout Essex roundhead soldier and preacher, Captain Samuel Tavenor, who became a Baptist, and was dipped in the Delph at Sandwich in 1663. He was buried at Deal, in what has since become the Unitarian chapel.

In Walmer Castle the Duke of Wellington lived as Warden of the Cinque Ports, and in the faded old arm-chair of his ship's-cabin-like bed-chamber there he died. I was at Deal when he lay dead in the castle. The flag floated at half-staff. Around, appropriate mutes, stood the Rifles, in their dark uniforms, with arms reversed. And the ensigns of a thousand wind-bound vessels in the Downs were hoisted half-mast high.

COMMITTED TO THE DEEP.

AN INCIDENT FROM PERSONAL RECOLLECTION OF LIFE AT SEA.

WE were just about rounding the half-way corner of our return voyage from Calcutta, Canton, and Singapore, by the old course round the Cape of Good Hope; that is to say, somewhere near a safe point between latitude 42° south and 30° of east longitude, which a good navigator takes in the spring season of those regions, before giving the word to "'bout ship," and bear up direct for Old England again. After the long slant downwards from the Indian Ocean, with the bow directed to space unknown, this is the turn of the weary road; till it comes, you cannot be said to be fairly homeward-bound; and, as may well be conceived when the weather has been thick, the wind north-westerly, the current easterly, without a sure observation aloft for days and nights on end, the orders are looked for with some anxiety by all hands.

Such had been our case, but by the close of the week there came lightening of the clouds, and after sundown, in the second dog-watch of the Saturday evening, there was a blink of some of the known stars through a break of the sky aloft. Whilst we were hurrying with our supper, down in the fore-peak, the decks clear of us, the captain managed to get an observation taken,—he and the mates holding on by turns to the rigging, and balancing and checking each other with quadrant and sextant, whilst "Hanoverian Harry," the best steersman aboard, humoured the ship to wind and sea. Harry heard and saw it all, as they worked out their joint calculations by the light of the binnacle; indeed, it was clear enough already to us below, from the captain's manner, that he had got sure of his ground. The moon was rising, and the grey scud flying higher; we knew as well as if he had said it what his first orders would be, which, you may guess, made us all the livelier company. The "second dog-watch" has ordinarily a privilege, but sevenfold so upon a Saturday night; moreover we had been having many hours' toil without a break. As for the weather, it was nothing to speak of in itself, only a good stiff working breeze that made up for the heavy swell; and the moonlight being what was the most wanted, we had our dog-watch out.

It was the cheeriest by far that we had seen for many a month in the old *Westminster*. Except the man at the wheel, the whole crew was there, down to the softest youngsters that berthed in the half-deck, and there

had to keep their distance whilst the glee grew ; with their masters too, gruff Chips the carpenter, the surly boatswain, and the crusty sailmaker, old croaking Jakes ; not to forget the cook, hight "the Doctor," from his dark quarters about the coal-tier. Counting none of them, nor us boys forward, there were three and twenty of a crew in our Indiaman, both watches taking their supper together ; with whom Hanoverian Harry made up the complement. Some of them were as prime tars as ever stepped deck ; there was Jack Jones the Scotchman (his name too odd to be true), quiet, but rough and ready, always able to hold his own ; there was strapping nian-o'-war Jack, and the handy young American who had come in at Canton for the man that slipped us there with his "advances" of pay ; there was blithe Bob Perry, hasty-tempered, but a smart foretopman and as good a singer. There was wild "whaler" Anderson above all, strong beyond common, double-jointed, the king of the forecastle when he chose ; afraid of nothing, caring for nothing or no one—mate nor captain if need be—unless it was for Hanoverian Harry of the other watch. Harry had sailed with him before, and still turned in and out with him to the same hammock, being in a sense his "chum," if such a thing could be with Anderson. It is of men who really were, that I am telling ; the very names, the looks, and the words, that at times come clearly to memory from the ship which is gone years and years ago. Men better known to me, and closer than ever men since, they mount to view from the depths. Anderson rises again to sight, as he reached over Chips's head to a hammock for his sou'wester hat, and pulled out his oilskin coat from under some one, with no ceremony whatever, then put them on growling, bent to hurry on deck.

Harry came down accordingly, first shaking the wet well off him, then sitting in bare-headed to his meal. The company was what he cared for most, though, and still more the singing. He kept beating time to it, and joining in the choruses. It was curious to hear Hanoverian Harry joining in with his odd German accent. He did not much understand English, beyond common use at sea, having to spell slowly through a book if he tried it. He had got the loan from me, for Sundays, of the "Pilgrim's Progress." The pictures had been to his liking, but it had served him regularly from about the Bay of Biscay to Canton, and round again so far, without his appearing to have proceeded any great length in the allegorical journey. However, in his own language he must have been somewhat of a scholar, for not only had he a whole German Bible, at which he would take a quiet opportunity any day, but he could have chalked out nautical

bearings on the top of a chest, points in geography, or even questions in trigonometry to those that understood them, if not have used a quadrant himself with most mates. He gave us the latitude and longitude that night, as last found, to the exact figure, and showed how the course would bear when altered. The last thing he did was to ask Perry for another song, Bob's very best, and somehow or other an express favourite with Harry, which he used always to listen to without joining, and keep us all from spoiling. It was "Tom Bowling;" and as few ever liked to withstand Harry, the first stave of it had just begun when eight bells were struck at the binnacle. The last stroke had hardly sounded ere the word came along, the mates passing it on, the boatswain all alive and roaring, the captain standing prepared—"All hands on deck! Ready about ship! To your stations all!"

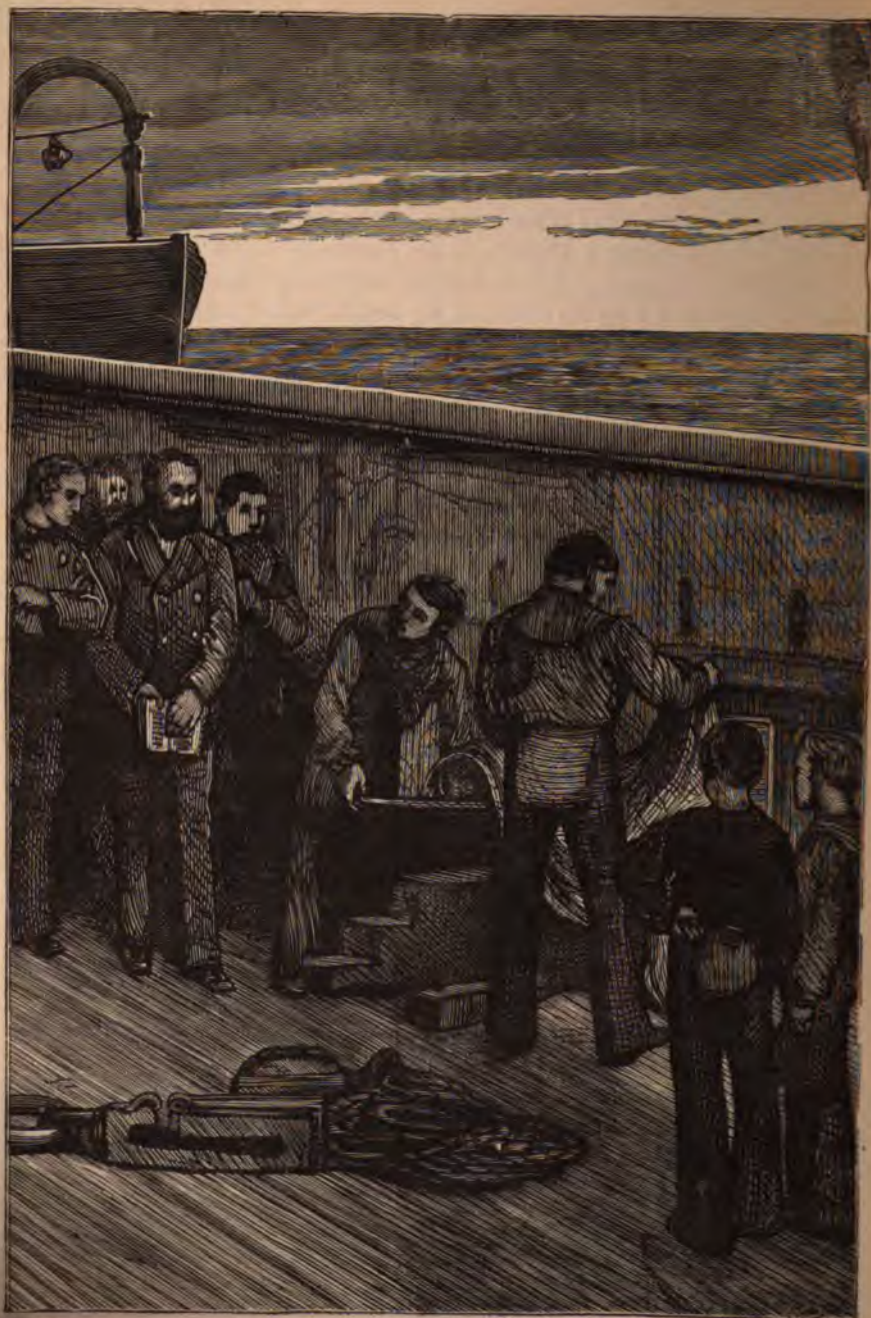
The moon was scarce through the clouds yet. The breeze was strong, though the better for taking, if well handled, on the long Cape seas that ran heavy against our starboard bow. No sooner was the foremost headsail lowered on the bowsprit, with the foresheet raised and the helm eased down, than the ship came up gallantly towards the wind's eye. Main tack and sheet were let go, with lee-braces and after-bowlines.

"Mainsail haul!" came the captain's voice through the trumpet, at the right moment, in the breath-taking of the bustle. "Meet her with her helm!" he said, throwing his hand to suit; and round she went handsomely, not too fast, checked by the use of the yard-braces, under our chief mate's care, with good steermanship from Anderson, who was still at the wheel. No man aboard could have been better there, unless it might be Hanoverian Harry only. The ship had turned that viewless corner aforesaid, on her new slant upward to pass the Cape; she fairly shifted the slope of her deck to starboard, and gathered way to keep above the following seas, with a spray over her breast-hooks, and a long forge forward, right on the back of a wrinkling billow, that stretched half a mile ahead. Extra sail was being set to lift her free; for every one felt by the "send" of that sea, that the quicker she took it the better for the next. "Luff a little; keep the leech of the fore-topsail lifting, my man!" cried Captain Park. As for Anderson, he did not need the word; he was easing her already to the best of man's power. "Down fore-tack!" sung out the mate; "down with it, men—bowse it down smart, and lift her!" He ran forward himself; but at that moment the first of the next wave caught her a little too fast for them, the ship giving a roll, and a pitch, and a lurch, almost all in one, taking a green sea across her bows.

This sent the tail of the fore-tack washing one way, the men another, the foremost man excepted; and if he had held on, he would have been all right. As it was, the heavy tack of the foresail went flapping up from him in the wind, then down it came right at him again, like the wing of a great bird in the shadow of the sail, the blocks hitting him on the head, so that you could hear it through all the confusion, as if a bullock had been felled. Owing to the dark, few had any notion who it was till he was lifted, water put on his face, and his mouth washed, whilst the surgeon came along. It was no other than Hanoverian Harry, and he never stirred more, having been killed in a moment, without time, so far as appeared, to feel much pain.

They carried him in under the topgallant forecastle, above the fore-peak, where the anchor-gear and chain-tiers lay. Tired as all hands had been, I may say there were few that held to the order of the watches that night. After the surgeon left, the old sailmaker and the cook stayed up to help, Anderson, of course, taking the main charge. In the broken sleep I had myself below, one time I knew that Anderson came down to Harry's chest under the hammocks, and got out things they required; other times I could hear him overhead, barefooted, hurrying backwards and forwards on his usual "fisherman's walk, three-steps-and-overboard," but faster far, like some swift wild beast confined. Then, again, he stood stock-still in a moment, or flung himself against the side, and all was quiet till he commenced hurrying as before. It was understood that he blamed himself for relieving his shipmate from the wheel, and thus, as it were, bringing him to his fate; but to speak to Anderson about it would have been dangerous.

Before the morning watch, topsails had to be reefed and double-reefed, when up we all flew, some of us but half awake, and I could see Anderson in his striped guernsey at the weather-earring of the foretopsail, busy with it. We had the main one, where the same leading place used to be Harry's; and somehow it startled you to hear a different voice sing out to us, "All ready to windward—haul out to loo'ard!" Anderson turned at the voice, too, with an angry look; in fact, every time that orders were passed, or the watch called, it was not easy to get rid of the thought that Harry would be there. Our watch had the morning turn, that time; and, as soon as day began to break, the old sailmaker, whose duty it was, came up with the cook, to do what was last required, bringing two heavy carronade shot (twenty-four pounders) to sew in at the foot of the hammock. Harry lay on it then, all dressed in his best duck frock and



trousers that he kept for Sundays in the tropics, with no sign left about the head or the mouth of how it had happened, but much as if he had fallen asleep upon his back under the shade of the fore-castle. He had a well-shaped face, a little pock-marked, with an open forehead that used to look white by comparison, but there now was little difference anywhere; he had a square brown beard and a fine straight nose, foreign like. As for Anderson, he had fallen dead asleep, out of sheer weariness; but the moment the men came, he was up, looking after things. Both watches of the crew came in before the sailmaker sewed up the top-end, then they went out together. What struck us youngsters most was the way Anderson kept watching while the last stitches were taken. When it came to the last stitch of all, old Jakes put off and fiddled with the point of the palm-needle against the canvas; he wanted to do something, either with or without the foretopman's knowledge, that had been spoken of between them. But there was no escaping Anderson's eye; in fact, it was like live coal from under his black brows that joined each other.

"It's no more nor proper custom," complained the sailmaker, still holding for it; "iron'll not hold 'em down else—and I've knowed it myself," said he, well-nigh whimpering, "when the last stitch weren't right taken that they've rose again! It's but doin' as I'd be done by!"

"Pass you that stitch as I bade ye, old man—see that ye keep to the canvas only, look!" was all Anderson said, pointing with his finger; and Jakes knew him too well to do otherwise.

It was duly made fast: then all was left safe bolted in, till the growth of the day. The thing that the sailmaker had wanted to do, was the old custom of his trade afloat, namely, to take the last stitch of yarn through the nose. Without that, it used to be firmly believed that those who were buried at sea could never rest, but some time or somewhere must come up again from the deepest water.

Burials at sea are never long put off, and in this case it took place in the first afternoon. Some few passengers being in the ship, the day Sunday, and the man much respected, there was rather more ceremony than some might have had. A grating had been rigged to the open gun-port of the aftermost lee carronade, on which the burden in the hammock was laid; and it need not be said who was chief mourner with Anderson there. It was we youngest lads that had best reason to be next in missing Harry, for of all men aboard, with the rude sea-vein that prevailed, he was the only one that could be said to have ever shown the milk of human kindness. He and I, too, had been close friends, walk-

ing out good part of many a night-watch together, while he spun sea yarns in his roundabout German style. There was no one of the nature of a chaplain on board, and Captain Park made no such professions; however, it would not have done to let Harry's burial pass without something in that way. Consequently the captain read the service from the Prayer Book, at least some chief portions, whilst the maintopsail was squared, to stop the ship's way a little; and it was strange to hear the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the deep—"

The ship rose high on the big wave, till you looked down a hill; and the captain signed to the men at the grating. The inner end lifted, and away down feet foremost shot the hammock into the yeasty blue as it swelled up alongside; the bubbles that rose were almost at Anderson's face in the port-hole, and there came a great green surge off the ship's side, as if from a hand above. Down along with it we dipped, the mate signing to the sail-trimmers and the helmsman to let her ease off; whilst in the lull of the trough you caught the words plainer—

"—To be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body (when the sea shall give up her dead), and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ—" But the rest was taken out of the captain's mouth, as the ship lifted, with the breeze catching again, and the creak of the yards. He closed the book, and signed to Mr. Sproule, the chief mate, who sang out to "Round in main-yards, there—keep her away again!" to the wheel. "A small pull on the weather-braces," cried he, "haul out your bowlines!" And with that, on we went upon our course for the Cape, which we made the next morning, with the long flat top of Table Mountain quite distinct, the Lion's Rump beside it, and the other hills. After that we bore away and stood right up for the main Atlantic.

I can see Anderson's face yet, as he looked back inboard at the captain reading about the Resurrection that was to be expected for Hanoverian Harry. Pretty much of a heathen the foretopman was, in himself, as I can testify; though for that part of it, none of us all could at that time have claimed anything to speak of, the other way. Most of the men continued to the last to have a vague notion that when the white Cape pigeons, the frigate-birds, and great albatrosses, followed in our wake, Harry had a good chance to gain a berth among them. Some were still more particular as to the petrels, "Mother Carey's chickens,"

which were generally fancied to be sailors' spirits. As to the old sail-maker, he croaked all along till the anchors were dropped in the river, and the ship finally hauled into dock : he had sewed up many a hammock in his time, his sleep was seldom very sound, his conscience seemed often to prick him about the way in which that last stitch had been taken with Harry. But whatever was said, no one dared breathe it within hearing of Anderson. I firmly believe that he held to the new notion of his old shipmate's happy state and future rising in the body. The foretopman had once saved Harry's life off that very Cape, and there were others of us, the very ones he would have shoved about most roughly on board, whom he had risked his life at various times to keep from harm. As to drink, his own great enemy, which set him next thing to mad, he had foresworn it for the rest of the voyage, at Harry's entreaty ; and till literally freed from the oath, which none but Harry could do, certain I feel that no power on earth could have drawn him against it. It was long before his gloom broke to let him open his lips about his shipmate's death, and this was but once, so far as I know, when we two were up aloft together, I passing the ball of marline for him as he "served" some gear there. Seeing that Harry and I had been close friends, and that my father was a Scotch "parson," Anderson grimly asked me what I had thought of the matter. My only thought was that if one was to be taken and others left, Hanoverian Harry appeared to me to be the fittest of all aboard. Drawing his rough head back and giving me a long look, he said, "Ay—*there*, youngster, you're about right." And he said no more.

Honest Harry ! sunk long ago to the bottom, or to the floating abysmal mid-region of the fathomless Cape seas, the favoured sea-song comes to mind at remembrance of you—the one called for in that last dog-watch, which was not finished :—

"What though his body's under hatches,
His soul has gone aloft."

Still better its other words—

May'st thou, poor Tom, find pleasant weather
When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call Life's crew together,
The word to pipe all hands !"



HOW WE SPENT THE WINTER IN ALGIERS.

IF you were asked in school or out of it to "describe" winter, I wonder what you would say.

I think it would be something like this:—Blue noses, red fingers, dark mornings, and such cold—oh! such cold water for the bath! Old Jack Frost catching hold of us by the tips of our toes the moment we pop those toes out of bed, and peeping in at us all day long, through window-panes thick with crystals. This is indoors.

Old Jack Frost playing all sorts of pranks out-of-doors too,—like the mischievous fairy that he is,—turning the water into ice, and the trees into twelfth-cake ornaments; covering all the earth and every house-top and every rail with a soft mantle of whitest, purest fur, or hanging the bare boughs with a million million frost-diamonds, that sparkle and glitter in the pale rays of the winter sun.

This is what you would say about winter, is it? Now, then, let me tell you what I say.

I say that I am sitting out in a garden—in what might be almost a fairy garden from the richness and beauty and grand colouring of the flowers and shrubs about me; that I am lazily reclining under an umbrella, and wondering whether it is not, at noon, just a little—a very little—too hot for a walk; that I am glad to listen to the pleasant trickling of the fountain close to me,—it sounds so cool and refreshing; and glad, as one must be surely, at all times, to hear above one's head, in the feathery green branches, the gay songs of the wild birds.

"Ah!" say you, "songs of birds and flowers and green trees in winter. This is nonsense!"

But I assure you it is not nonsense. It is Algiers.

Perhaps you never heard of it; or perhaps you may have read some thrilling story of wild seamen—pirates they used to be called—who, with black flags at the masts of their fleet little vessels, scoured all the seas, and took captive any unfortunate travellers they could lay their wicked hands upon, carrying them off to be slaves in their own far-away pirate home, where they treated their captives with cruelty, making them work night and day, and beating them with great whips when they were tired or weak.

If you have read or heard any such sad tale, you may be almost sure that the pirate home of these wicked sea-robbers was Algiers.



Algers

I can't tell you of half the dreadful things these old pirates used to do: how they used not only to catch hold of the people who were voyaging in ships from one place to another, but how they would sometimes even land in the dead of the night in some peaceful little seaside village, and carry away ever so many innocent folks out of their comfortable beds, to be slaves and prisoners in far-away Algiers.

If you had lived in those days there is no knowing what might not have happened to you during one of your summer holiday visits to Rams-



Arab.

gate or Margate. That is, if the pirates had happened to come and take a fancy to you. For they, like the ogres, liked to get hold of children better than anybody else; not that they ate them, though, to be sure—considering the cruel way in which they treated their poor slaves—it would have been kinder, perhaps, if they had so finished them up at once.

However, all this is happily over long ago,—long before you and I were born, for which we may be thankful; and we may also be glad and proud to think that it was England and Englishmen who put an end to

these wicked old Algerine pirates, and burnt their ships and destroyed their strong castles, and declared, once and for all, that Britons wouldn't be slaves themselves, or allow anybody else to be so, so far as they could help it.

And now we may take our voyages, and even go to Algiers itself, and enjoy all its beauties, and bask in its brilliant sunshine, and gladden our hearts with the sight of its exquisite flowers, without fear or misgiving. So that for this, as well as for a good many other things, we may be thank-



Water-carrier.

ful that we don't live in the old times which some people still persist in calling "good."

If you want to find Algiers, I'll tell you how to go. You go straight down through the big map of France to the bottom, and then straight on again across the sea,—not the tossing green-grey sea that you know of, and in whose waves you have often taken a "dip" at one or another of our seaside bathing-places,—but the Mediterranean, a wide, far-reaching sea of purest blue ; purer and bluer and far more beautiful than any sea

you ever saw painted in a picture. And when you have steamed away for two whole days across this blue expanse, you will come to Algiers.

You will see it rising white and glistening out of the blue water into the blue sky—so dazzlingly white, that, as the hot sunlight gleams upon it, you have to wink your eyes before you are quite sure that you can take another look; and then you wink and look again, and have to pinch yourself this time, because you feel quite sure that you have been



Moorish Woman.

carried by the fairies into the enchanted land: to the city built of mother-o'-pearl, which floats on the turquoise sea.

After all it is not fairyland, but it is very like it, not only at the first glimpse, but for those who have lived in it for days and weeks and months. It is either fairyland or the land of the Arabian Nights—I am not quite sure which.

I wonder whether I could make you see it through my eyes? I will try.

It is now Christmas-time, and I am sitting, as I told you, in my garden.

Just as you are running to the fire with very pinched fingers, or perhaps learning to skate in the foggy air out on the pond, I am putting up my big white umbrella, because the trees don't shade me quite enough. Just as the darkness of the winter afternoon is settling down upon you, I am beginning to look out for the glorious crimson and gold sunset colours, that will presently flood the western sky with a bank of fiery cloud, and dye the blue sea in streaks of red and purple.



Kabyle Woman.

About me, in my garden, are flowers with gay butterflies fluttering about them, and flowering shrubs and Christmas-trees—such beauties! They don't grow candles, though. But they grow oranges and lemons, golden and yellow,—which is more than your Christmas-trees do, *really*; and beyond the green and gold of my garden, I can see the blue sea, with tiny little white-sailed boats, that from the distance look for all the world like toys, skimming about on it. And behind my garden, if I only turn my head, I can see the great white crests of grand high mountains, which the ice fairies have caked all over with snow, just as they cake the roofs of your houses; only fortunately for us this is so far away and high up, that one can look at it and think how pretty it is without having even so much as a cold tip to one's nose.

This seems very like fairyland, doesn't it? Then, as for the Arabian Nights, you've only got to peep over the pomegranate hedge of the garden towards the white Arab town to be quite sure that we are in the land of Aladdin.

The houses are so quaint and funny. There is one quite near us among the trees. Look at it. What does it look like?

At first I think you might take it for an enormous lump of white chalk popped down by some giant in the orange grove; but presently, if you



A Mosque.

walk round it, you will find a door, and if you look very closely indeed, you may, with some trouble, discover a window or two, very high up from the ground, and certainly not so big as a pocket-handkerchief. No chance of looking out of window there. In fact, a splendid place for learning lessons in!

Yet it does seem strange to us that people who lived in the midst of such beautiful scenery should take such pains to shut it out.

One of their reasons for doing so is, that in summer the heat is very great, and then the less light and air that are admitted into the house, the cooler the house is.

But added to this, the Arab people have a fancy for being mysterious,

as indeed you would think, if you saw the ladies walking about wrapped up in great white shawls, which cover them from head to foot, even over their faces, leaving only a tiny hole for each of their eyes, and sometimes only one little hole for one eye !

You can't think how funny they look, and certainly they must be very uncomfortable, one would fancy ; but perhaps, being used to this strange disguise, they would feel funnier and more uncomfortable without it.



An Arab Street.

Only, my little girl-reader, I think you may feel very thankful, among other things, that you were not born an Arab baby instead of an English one, for I am sure you wouldn't have liked to go about the world with your face so tightly tied up that you could hardly breathe through your nose or speak through your mouth, not to mention several other little matters in which Arab women are not nearly so well off as English ones.

But I was going to tell you something about the houses in which the Arabs live. They are not as you might fancy, on account of having no windows, all dark ; but are built round a courtyard, paved with marble,

and ornamented with flowers and a fountain. The rooms of the house, which are very tiny, look into the courtyard. They have nothing in them in the way of what we should call furniture. Some of the sleeping-rooms have a sort of bed on a shelf, but in place of chairs and sofas the Arabs use only mats and rich carpets, upon which they stretch themselves, or squat, as you would do when you play hunt-the-slipper.

Just outside my garden there is, underneath the shade of the pepper-trees, and walled about with a great hedge of prickly cactus, on which



An Oasis.

the red ripe fruit is hanging, a well and fountain of pure ever-flowing water. Here, morning and evening, the women come with pitchers on their heads or shoulders to draw, reminding one of beautiful Rebekah, who, you will remember in the sweet Bible story, drew the water for Abraham's servant and for his camels, when he came seeking her as the wife of Isaac, his master's son.

Sometimes we have the camels as well,—heavy, clumsy, ugly beasts they are too, but so hard-working and patient that one must like them; though for all their patience they do grumble a good deal—groaning and moaning, and making a terrible noise when they kneel down to have their packs put on, just as if they wouldn't bear it another minute. But, like

a good many other folks, they grumble and bear, being, perhaps, all the happier in their minds when they have had their grumble out.

Then we have asses, laden with corn, and wine and oil in skins, just like the asses that Joseph's brethren travelled with into Egypt, all stopping to drink from our well; and last, but not by any means least, we have the Arabs themselves,—noble upright figures enveloped in their



A Palm Grove.

white cloaks, and with staves in their hands, clad just as they and their fathers have been any time these two thousand years, bringing back more strongly to our minds than anything else could do the Bible stories which young and old alike love to hear and to read. For as we watch the knots of brown-faced men in their grandly-falling white robes grouped about the well, and discussing some matter gravely among themselves, we seem to see with our own eyes those jealous sons of old Israel debating as to the fate of their young brother Joseph. As we see a soft-eyed Arab

woman lifting the heavy pitcher to her head, we think of Rachel, for whom Jacob so willingly performed the task. As we notice, again and again, an ass, with a burden upon it of a white-veiled woman and child, making its patient way along the hot white road, while beside the animal strides a tall stalwart Arab, wrapping his white burnous about him, and grasping his tall staff,—we are irresistibly reminded of that little “family” who we know so made their humble journey to Egypt, when a foolish and wicked ruler was vainly seeking the young Child’s life to destroy it.

It is almost impossible to describe to you half the charming pictures of still life and active life, which my post of observation among the golden orange-trees of my garden gives me; but I wish that you, my reader, could see them yourself.

I doubt not, however, that you, too, can find both things of beauty and things of interest. It would be a poor world if all the beauty and the pleasure were on one side of it.

That you have, just now, quite as much sunshine on your side of it as we have, I do not think. But if the wind whistles cold without, I trust that the good English fires burn bright within, and most sincerely do I hope, however dark the winter days may be, that you have with you, to warm and gladden you, the best sunshine of all—the sunshine of the home and heart.



ON A CREEK IN A COT.

GOLDEN acacia-blossoms hang over their reflection in the still green water, and the hot air around is luscious with the scent of honey, which has attracted a swarm of tiny stingless native bees, and naturalized European bees that have left their hives for good and taken to the bush. They are very busy, and yet their drowsy hum is in full harmony with the bright hush of the cloudless, windless noon.

It makes one think of the hum we hear at home about a flowering lime. But no fragrant tassels droop now from English limes. Their branches spread bare and black; the bees that haunted them are dead or in their hives. It is still *ante meridiem* in England, two o’clock: perhaps, as the old watchmen used to chant, “a fine frosty morning,” in which the breath of the policeman, stamping his feet on the frozen snow and clapping his

gloved and mittened hands across his great-coated breast, goes up like cigar smoke; or perchance he and the waits, in common misery and mutual hatred and suspicion, are groping through a London fog, or shivering in the slush of a London thaw.

One may fondly love the far-away, dear old country, and yet not be tempted to exclaim, "Oh, to be in England now!"

The hot air is so still that even the dark-tressed casuarinas are not moving. They droop over the creek in a very different fashion from that of the wattle-flowers; they are still sad, but for once they have forgotten to sigh. The tall ferns upon the broken banks curve their broad fronds without a rustle, and the reeds, that look like a troop of spearmen who halted when their fore ranks rode into the water to cool their horses, carry bannerets almost as motionless. The green water would likewise seem entranced were it not for a slight swaying—so slight as to be barely perceptible—of the white lilies which float upon it. A berry-blossom that falls from the cluster of its white sisterhood still lingering on the crimson-beaded bush appears for a time to lie exactly beneath the spray from which it fell, and when at last it is seen to be in motion, you think it may be moving on at that rate for a week before it reaches the trifling slope down which the creek, not yet dried up into a chain of ponds, most plainly asserts its current.

But if we bring the cot in close beside the bank, take a turn with the painter round this black stump, and try to be as still as our surroundings, perhaps we shall find that there is more life here than we imagined. Rooks at home, they say, can smell gunpowder, and tell an air-cane from a walking-stick in the far distance. The birds about here are so seldom shot at that, in spite of the local boast that all native Australians are in all things superior to their English congeners, I do not think they can have attained such skill. If they have, however, they will soon find out they have no cause for fear, since we—that is, I (for modesty's sake so magnified)—have come out with no thought of "sport," but simply to while away a holiday in solitary pottering up and down this quiet creek in this old cot.

Our craft cannot be said to ride the waters like a thing of life (she was built at the station by old Paddy Fury, our North of Ireland man), but at any rate she can lie on the waters like a lop-sided log. And now let us look and listen.

See, that hump of grey and glowing wood-ash is a heron's back. He stalks a little farther into the water, and now you can see between the

reeds the tip of his long sharp beak and the ends of his ruffled breast-feathers hanging loose like the tassels of a carelessly tied comforter, most otiose in such weather. That mat of reeds and weeds, peradventure, is a coot's nest, for there, close by, Mr. Coot is feeding himself, but looking, as he lifts his red leg to his red beak, very much like a toper scratching his nose, or picking his teeth with a coral toothpick.

And there is a pair of dabchicks cruising about—and there now, they are *not*, so suddenly have they gone under:—

"Like a dive-dapper peering through a wave,
Who being looked on, ducks as quickly in."

Round the bend comes a tiny squadron of tiny grey, black, and white ducks, but at sight of the cot, up they splash and perch on the red gum-trees on the banks.

Besides the bees, as we pull on, we find birds are fluttering about the golden-blossomed acacias—their own brown and yellow wattle-birds, and black and yellow honey-eaters; and here where the tea-tree-poles grow thick the silence of the swoony air is dissipated by an almost continuous series of *ring-ting, ring-ting, ring-tings*, as a flock of bell-birds fly backwards and forwards between their covert and the gum-trees, with as much fuss as if they were carrying most important messages, like *aides-de-camp* at a review. Then there is dreamy silence again, only broken by the popping of the water against the boat and the ear-cooling drip of the drops from the dipping oars, until a dusty-maned, long-tailed brood-mare that has come down to drink, gives a floundering splash and trots off whinnying, with her foal scrambling after her on its stilt-like legs, both, when they have reached the top of the here sloping creek-side, turning their heads to look at their disturber, the mother with angrily, the little one with inquisitively startled, eyes.

The grey boles and branches of the high trees on both hands, glistening like granite in the sunshine, their dull-green metallic leaves hanging motionless and almost shadowless, have a weird, other-worldish look, unfamiliar in more than a mere geographical sense, until swallows skim backwards and forwards across the creek, just as if it were the Kennet or the Cam. But the scene is strange again when, instead of those silent sober-suited traversers astern, a flock of gaily-plumaged paroquets flashes across the blue sky with startlingly sudden gleam and scream. Then all is silence again until a startled rail rises out of a patch of rushes, making as much to-do as if it were a surprised Diana or Musidora, and flaps a

little way in a great fluster, when it drops upon its dangled legs, and scurries off like a lamplighter.

Here the branches of the bank-side trees almost meet overhead. As we lie for a minute or two upon our always most leisurely-pulled, rough-hewn oars, in such scanty shelter from the sunshine as the edge-on foliage gives, and look down into the water, a few little dark fish, frightened at our shadow, dart singly and in tiny shoals into their harbours of refuge.

What a straight black stick that is we see floating in the water when we are once more in full sunlight! As the cot heads for it the "larboard" oar touches it, and it writhes off like a transmuted Aaron's rod. It needed no transmutation. It was a black snake, simultaneously bathing and basking. Compare the wake of a screw-steamer with that left by the graceful wriggler—what a contrast! Nevertheless, the long fellow is lethal. Where has he gone to? Suppose he should come back from that bit of damp scrub, for which he seemed to be steering, with a reinforcement of his fellows, and board the boat! Mythology, no doubt, made the devil a serpent because mankind loathes serpents, even when it professes to worship them. But whence springs this general loathing? How is it those who, as a rule, thoroughly believe that

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,"

feel themselves compelled by an irresistible impulse to try to kill a venomous snake, even when it is doing its best to get out of their way? If Auld Nickieben could prompt a Burns to be "wae to think upo' yon den" e'en for his sake, how is it that the serpent can find no pitying bard?

Nature may have considerably sent the native cherry into the world ready stoned, at least with the stone outside, but it does not appear very sapid or succulent to human palates. That pair of pigeons, however, glowing in the sunshine as if made of vivified golden bronze, are pecking away at the red pills as if they enjoyed them. It seems strange that they do not flutter down from the cherry-tree on to the pumpkin-vine straggling about the deserted hut hard by. The pumpkins would be as easy to peck, and better worth pecking.

There is not much shadow around the hut, or within either—since the greater part of the bark roof has fallen in; and yet the place looks sad. The golden and goldening gourds, and the golden blossoms that still star the broad leaves of the vine, cannot brighten it, in spite of the splen-

did sunshine that pours down on them. The brick chimney has fallen on the bulging brick fireplace; the sun shines full on the uneven brick hearth within. With a wood fire blazing or smouldering on it, it would have looked more cheerful, for the silent sunshine seems to say that there fire will never again be lighted, unless, perchance, a bush-fire should sweep the ruined slabs away. There is no history connected with it, and yet it must have one, a dreadful or most dreary one. The place looks "cursed"—no resting-place again, however long what is left of it may stand, but one to which any belated traveller, compelled to camp out in its neighbourhood, would give a very wide berth. Perhaps the window-holes were never glazed, but, quite empty as they now are, they have a ghastly resemblance to hollow eye-sockets, and the doorway from which the door has been wrenched reminds one dismally of Philomel and Lavinia.

But we will think no more of Philomel. A green thrush is singing, and in Australia we must make the most of any bird melody we can get. *There* is one of the queer noises which Australian birds make. It was a bird, not a whip-lash, that gave that crack among the tea-trees. Out of them comes something more like music—the warble of a wren. His song at home would scarcely have won him the name of the Superb Warbler, but our little English wren, pretty in a brown homely fashion though it be, would have to hide its diminished head in a competitive examination for the prize of beauty when compared with this lordly little fellow. Wishing to be seen as well as heard, out he flits from the tea-trees, and alights where the sunshine can show off to best advantage his brilliant blue and glossy black. A very different bird, a clumsy, bearded, grey musk-duck, flaps up from the water, and flops down among the reeds and rushes, as the cot forges ahead. Pushing in to see what has become of it, we rouse, not the duck, but a dingo that has been curled up, more like a cat than a dog, with thick brush almost touching his thin nose, on a dry little bit of comparatively open ground in the tea-tree scrub. Up jumps his Rufus Rascality—a far less sleek, good-tempered-looking beast than the pair they show at home in the Zoological Gardens. He winks his eyes, and seems to wonder whether the hot sunshine can possibly be moonlight abnormally bright and burning—if it really can be time for him to get up and go about his murderous business. But he soon discovers how matters stand, and slinks off with a cowardly sidelong scowl, which plainly says, "Why am I roused by any one I dare not eat or mangle?"

Leaving him to find some other spot in which he can lie down and dream of hunting kangaroo in pack with his dismally howling fellows, and of leaping hurdles to bite right and left, and scatter the flock in wild dismay, we will push on to find a little real shade under the dark leaves of that noble "myrtle," half as high as the Monument. A little flock of black duck, sheltering there, splash up at the sound of oars, and fly off quack-quacking in most needless alarm, with the sunbeams glancing like golden arrows from their purple wings. There are quail somewhere about—you can hear them tweeting in the scrub. That little white-waisted blue kestrel will pounce on one presently; and here comes a blue falcon in hot chase of the black duck we disturbed.

Two pretty little purple and yellow kingfishers are scuttling across the creek at the ford. At flood-times it is a ford no longer, and at most times you have to hitch your legs well up on the saddle when you cross, but now there is only just enough water left to enable us to pole the cot over. There is a great gathering here of crows and magpies, which somehow makes one think of a congress of the clergy with their wives; the sleekly sable, decorously roguish-eyed, stately-strutting, unctuously-croaking crows standing for the parsons, and the musically chatting magpies for their spouses in white crape shawls and black silk dresses. A horse-breaker, in weather-bronzed, rusty-ribboned cabbage-tree hat, striped shirt, and belted, particoloured moleskins, comes thundering along the track upon a half-broken horse. There is no reason why he should hurry, but native Australians seem compelled by some moral *astrus* always to ride post-haste. He has plenty of real flies about him. Notwithstanding his rapid motion, they cluster so thickly on his back that it looks like the magnified top of a blackcap pudding, and the same black nuisances are drinking thirstily at the angles of his eyes. "Good evening," he shouts—"evening" in up-country Australia, as in old-fashioned England, being used instead of "afternoon."

As he dashes into the water, which he flings about

"Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play."

the spare, lithe, brown-faced young fellow regards our creeping mode of progression with a glance of good-naturedly amused and amazed contempt. In a trice he is tearing up the opposite bank, and once more thundering along the hard-baked track, as if life or death depended on his speed. Yonder summer birds, leisurely flying over the gum-trees, going up and down like two boats on a summer sea, and gently whistling

their expression of their enjoyment, are a piquant contrast to the horse-man's breakneck race against time. He would find more than his match, however, in those swifts that shoot high over us like black lightning. Variegated lightning—blue, green, orange, and red—are the blue mountaintainers that next flash past us, and when we flush a flock of red lowries that had been giving themselves dip and shower baths in a shallow margin of the creek, the hot air seems to have caught fire. But the blue sky is soon spotted with black again—black cockatoos, fluttering about like soot-flakes. Green frogs croak among the water-weeds as if they were of all batrachians and mortal beings the most miserable; yellow frogs answer them from the trees in shrill derision; and then once more there is silence, scarcely broken by a low insect hum.

But now there is noise enough. Gum-trees spread far on either hand, and locusts clatter on them, making such a din as if all the iron ship-building yards on the Clyde and the Tyne, the Mersey and the Thames, were at work together. The leaves of a good many of the gum-trees are powdered with manna, giving them the look of candied citron-peel; more lie on the ground; and more again will fall in a summer snow-storm when the wind awakes.

The sun is sinking now. Mosquitoes are humming over the water, rising and falling in interlacing circles, in the westering light, like fountain-spray. Cattle that have been standing knee-deep or lying down in the shallow water, are plodding up the creek-bank, lowing as they go. A cloud of red dust slowly moving over the tree-tops in the distance, shows that a flock of sheep is trudging home to the hurdles. White cockatoos fly screaming back to roost, circling around their roosting-trees, and when they settle, spotting the dark foliage with great snowy flowers as before they flecked the blue sky with little snowy clouds. The pigeons have come down to take their last drink; the shy water-moles are rising and vanishing when they sight us, as suddenly as dabchicks.

But the moon will be up soon after the sun goes down; and so before we turn, let us go ashore and look at a bush grave.

The faintest breeze has begun to rustle the fibrous leaves of the dark sheoak under which it lies—a cracked mound, almost hidden in the coarse high grass, like dried-up reeds, which overtops the gray fence that rails in a little oblong about it. The grave is utterly nameless—not even a solitary initial is notched upon a rail. As we stand wondering who may lie buried there, the sun dips, and the laughing jackasses ring out.

Heard under the sadly sighing casuarina, their wild song has no merri-

ment in it, but fiendish mockery; and when from a swamp not far off a bittern begins its dreary boom, a "creepy" feeling comes over one, and we hasten back to the cot, and push off on our return voyage. The curlew wails, the frogs croak, the night-jar calls, a white owl floats by like a ghost, broad-winged moths brush downily across our cheeks, as we paddle through the gloom, ever and anon bumping up against a snag.

But ere long the moon is walking in full brightness, and the stars are out in glory only less. The pools on which the ducks and water-moles float black are sheets of shimmering silver; the nankeen of the night-heron stalking, croaking, along the bank, becomes pure white; the opossums, high up on the glittering gum-tree branches, can be easily made out, clearly defined against the dark-pearly sky.

But the deserted hut looks as dreary in the moonlight as it looked in the sunshine. Perhaps it would have looked still drearier half seen in dusk; but its look, as it is, is quite uncanny enough to make us hurry past, guessing fruitlessly, as we go, as to what was the dark deed done there *in* the darkness, or beneath the watching Southern Cross.

And when, after landing, we stand beside the American aloes and prickly-pears that hedge the orchard fence, within which the flying foxes are dropping down upon the peach-trees, and look out from the rise over the silver-topped bronze Bush, spreading for many a mile to the mountain range which rests cloudlike on the northern sky, we speculate how many more such secrets the mysterious expanse may hide as those of the nameless grave and ruined hut past which the creek, of which here and there a bright reach peeps out, glides silently on, keeping its own counsel for ever.



A RUN ROUND LONDON'S EMERALD RING.

IT seemed at one time as if we should have no summer in London, and a good part, if not all, of our spring we did lose. The long-overdue leaves and flowers peeped forth to find whether the world were warm enough for them to come out fully, and then, shivering, seemed inclined to go to bed again and sleep until next year.

But golden suns and blue skies have come at last, and, disappointed in the spring, the Cockney's fancy has, in summer, lightly turned to thoughts of trips.

And what a wealth of lovely country close at hand Londoners have to choose from ! It would not be easy to exhaust the riches which sweet Surrey still keeps in store for the ungrateful citizens who so sorely fray and sully the hem of her green robe. Run down to Croydon, and you have, within a walk, Addington, the Archbishop of Canterbury's summer retreat, hard by the manor which the Conqueror bartered for a mess of hasty pudding ; Beddington, where Romans, or the Britons they had taught, made bronze spear-heads ; Waddon, with its drowsily humming mill ; lavender-wreathed Carshalton, whose tranquil lake is never frozen,



Kingston Bridge.

because the Wandle, which steals through it, is never allowed a minute's rest from work—an industrious destiny for which the river may largely thank, or otherwise, the Huguenots who settled on its banks.

Then there is Sutton, cradled in the downs, and only waking up at race-time ; Cuddington, which the Tudors “nobbled” for Nonsuch House ; Merton, famous for its *nolumus mutari* statutes, which gives its name to Merton College, and once held it—Merton, where Danes and Saxons killed one another, and where Dane-descended Nelson and Lady Hamilton lived ; where Becket was educated, and Captain Cook's wife spent her widowhood. Everybody knows Wimbledon, with its bracing or balmy spring breezes, its sultry, dreamy summer heat, and wooded “second distances.” Where our volunteers muster in amicable rivalry,

the men of Kent and Wessex had a desperate fight. At Kingstown our Saxon kings used to be concentrated, the stone on which they sat being preserved in the market-place, to bear evidence to the fact. Near Kingstown was fought the battle of which Carlyle writes: "The Duke of Buckingham got off; might almost as well have died with poor Brother Francis here, for any good he afterwards did. Two pretty youths, as their Vandyke portraits in Hampton Court still testify; one of them lived to become much uglier." The loveliness of the silver-threaded green that surrounds Richmond of many memories, is a tale that has been too often told to be



View from Richmond Hill.

told again; but fortunately the beauty never tires. At Petersham, hard by, Henry VIII. watched for the signal that should tell him Anne Boleyn's "little neck" had been severed like a harebell-stalk, and Jeanie Deans saved her sister Effie's life.

Descending the river, on which swans are cruising in their snowy squadrons, and later than usual this year the catkins dropped from the willows, we come to Kew, where Art joins with Nature to assemble the temperatures—the sylvas and the floras of almost every clime; to Mortlake, where so many a boatman's heart has beaten hard, where the Wizard Dee lies buried in the ivied church, and the almanack-maker, Partridge, whom Swift killed while still alive, in the churchyard; to Barnes, where roses still grow, *in memoriam*, about Edward Rose's grave, and the Villiers

who "lived to become much uglier" killed Lord Shrewsbury; to Putney, where Thomas Cromwell was born, and Oliver Cromwell held councils round the communion-table of the church, and where, in the Royal Hospital for Incurables, so many a pinched sufferer has found a palace for a home. Let us borrow the wings of a crow and fly from furze-tufted Putney Heath, famous for statesmen's duels, to Streatham Common, where also the golden gorse-blossoms are breathing forth their spicy fragrance. The house in which Dr. Johnson drank so many cups of Mrs. Thrale's tea has vanished. At Streatham Church lies buried a wife of whom her epitaph



Richmond Bridge.

records that she "was married near forty-seven years, and never did one thing to displease her husband." Could she have returned the compliment?

Anerley is no longer the lonely village; Penge has become populous; houses have climbed Gipsy Hill (rather curiously, gipsies still hang about Norwood); but to say nothing of the Sydenham Palace (which is *not* in Sydenham), noble prospects are still to be seen from this part of Surrey: wooded champaign, and in some senses a still grander view of smoke-canopied London's vast huddle of houses bristling with chimney-stacks and steeples.

And, in spite of the staring raw-beef architecture of the new school, Dulwich, clustering round its core Alleyne's time-mellowed college, and begirt with elms and grass which have also mixed themselves up with the

village, as if it had been built in an unfelled forest, still seems many a mile farther from London than the milestones make it out to be.

And now for Kent. To go to Greenwich for pleasure, except in the form of a fish dinner, is looked upon as a proof of Cockney vulgarity, and yet there are few places in England more picturesque and more interesting. But we miss the reeling old pensioners, or "geese," as they were locally called from their gait, who have given place to a younger race of blue-coated college men. The college itself, however, stands as nobly as ever—white, black, grey, and red, with its school, built for a



Kew Bridge.

queen's riverside residence, embossed on its green background of sloping Greenwich Park, crowned with the red Observatory, dotted with deer and holiday-makers, and richly wooded,—including among its trees some jealously-guarded Spanish chestnuts. Kings have hunted in the park, and the whole atmosphere of the place is heavy, so to speak, with royal and naval memories. On the site of the parish church, St. Alphege, who gives it his name, was murdered by the Danes. Because he would not ransom himself at the expense of his people, the drunken pirates pelted Alphege, or Elfheg, with beef-bones, and at last put him out of his misery with a harder blow from an axe. Church Street looks much the same as

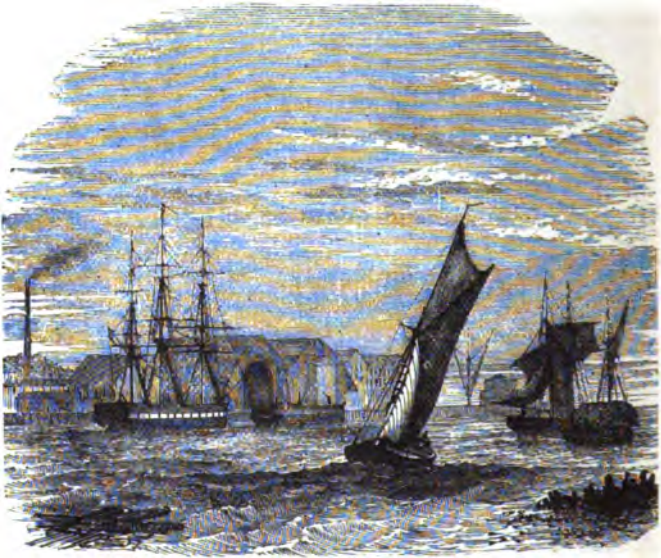


Greenwich Hospital (from the River).



Greenwich Hospital (West Front).

it did when Clarkson Stanfield illustrated "Poor Jack." And then there is breezy Blackheath, crossed by its Roman road, where rebels have encamped, and monarchs been welcomed back to England. The housings of the donkeys in the distance dot the dark heath like specks of white-wash, and the coats of the golfers like scarlet geraniums. In the pleasant grounds of Morden College "decayed Turkey merchants" muse in peace. The famous Horn Fair of Charlton is suppressed. Part of the manor which King John is said to have granted to the injured husband as com-



Woolwich Dockyard.

pensation for his naughtiness is now included in the long-walled grounds of Charlton House. At their foot lies the *Warspite*, with her smart crew of miniature man-of-war's men.

Past Woolwich Common we go on to Shooter's Hill, where, on a long-ago May Day, Henry VIII. and one of his Catherine's were welcomed by a band of archers clad in green, who, after they had displayed their skill under the captaincy of a sham Robin Hood, regaled their monarch with a sumptuous picnic in the woods. On Shooter's Hill stands Severndroog Castle, a triangular tower raised by his wife to commemorate Sir E. W. James's gallant capture of the Indian stronghold which gives the castle its name.

At Crayford, where Watling Street crossed the Cray, or Crouch, a tributary of the Darent, which once swarmed with trout, Hengist slew 4,000 Britons who had tried to hold the ford. The manor of Bexley, which we traverse on our road to the Crays, was bequeathed by Camden to the University of Oxford for the endowment of the Professorship of Ancient History.

In 1723 a subterranean fire broke out in a North Cray wood. The armers of the neighbourhood fetched water in their waggons from Bexley for several days, in order to extinguish it. In this wood there are chalk-pits, or Danes' Holes as they are called in this part of Kent. Foot's Cray takes its name from one Fot, who held the manor in Edward the Confessor's time. Roman bricks or tiles are worked up in the churchyard wall of St. Paul's Cray. St. Mary's Cray was once a market-town, but ceased to be so when its market-house was blown down in 1703. It has a charity school, and unfortunately for former scholars, the neighbourhood used to abound in birch-trees. A mild jest is current to the effect that all fish taken in the Cray are cray-fish.

At Hayes the Pitts lived, and in its church Lord Chatham's funeral flags may still be seen. Keston also contains a residence of William Pitt's. Under a tree in its park he and another famous William—Wilberforce—discussed the abolition of the slave trade. Keston has a common, which includes a Cæsar's Camp, and the sources of the Ravensbourne, the Ravens' Stream, which falls into the Thames at muddy, brick-and-mortar-choked Deptford Creek.

To the north, in this pleasantly-wooded country, lies Bromley, where Bishops of Rochester lived from Saxon times down to our own. In the palace, which had a mineral spring resembling Tunbridge water, Atterbury schemed; and in Bromley College, an asylum for clergymen's widows, founded by Bishop Warner in Charles II.'s time, the factious prelate's daughter-in-law had to seek shelter. Dr. Johnson's wife was buried at Bromley, and "four *of*" the wives of a Mr. French, together with their husband. West of Bromley, with more fair country round, is Beckenham. In its yew-shaded old churchyard lies Margaret Finch, the more than centenarian Gipsy Queen of Norwood. To the east is Chislehurst, where Nicholas Bacon was born, and Francis Walsingham was buried. The modern associations of Camden Place—named after the antiquary who built it—need only to be referred to. When Greenwich became the favourite country royal residence, Eltham—*old home*—Palace, in which parliaments had been held and kings had revelled, fell into "the

portion of weeds and out-worn faces." It dwindled down to its hall, and that was turned into a barn. The moat ran dry, and was soon filled with grass.

A two miles' walk will bring us to Lee, within the shadow of whose old church, deserted, ivy-clad, and bird-haunted, lies Halley the astronomer. "Long, lazy Lewisham" must finish our list of Kentish country places within easy reach of London. Lewisham's Honour Oak is only the successor of the one under which Queen Elizabeth dined. Last century Lewisham was looked upon as thoroughly rural, as a place in which to enjoy "the peaceful sweets of a country life." John Wesley was fond of going into retreat there when he could spare time for a little of his busy leisure. In December, 1755, he writes in his journal: "I set out for Lewisham, appointing one to meet me with my horse at the Stones' End; but he mistook his way, and so left me to walk on in my boots and great coat. When I came within a quarter of a mile of Lewisham Bridge, a coach drove swiftly by me. I wondered why the coachman stopped, till he called and desired me to come up to him. The reason then appeared. The low grounds were quite covered with water, so that I could not have attempted to reach the bridge without hazarding my life." The Ravensbourne is still sometimes flooded, but that is a queer passage to think of when looking down on the little river from the Lewisham Junction of the North and Mid Kent Railways.

Purfleet, on the Essex side of the Thames, is as picturesque in its green and white as Greenhithe on the Kentish; but so much of the left bank of the river consists of mere marsh, with no background of hills as on the right bank, that a good many Londoners, whose knowledge of Essex is confined to what they see of it from the Gravesend steamboat, imagine it to be an almost hideously ugly, monotonously dull county. Many a prospect pleases, however, in inland Essex, and within easy reach of London. It contains sundry pretty spots, and others which, if not pretty are interesting.

Amongst the latter must be included fishy, tarry, somnolent, not too exquisitely fragrant Barking. A coarse green embankment, like the not yet completely formed cicatrice of a deep scratch with a rusty nail, holds a huge sewer, which pours London filth into the creek, with the chimneys of works, instead of primæval bulrushes, bristling on its shores, in which the once pure rural little river Rhoding loses itself. William the Conqueror lived at Barking for a time, whilst his forts nearer London were building. He rebuilt the little town, the Danes having destroyed it in

1870. The churchyard has a fire-bell gate, with a holy-rood chapel over it. Two hundred years or so before the Danes burnt the town an abbey was founded in Barking, the first nunnery in England. Its abbess was a peeress, and had great possessions, amongst them the livings of the London churches, All Hallows, Barking, and St. Margaret's, Lothbury, where the Golden Lecture is preached appropriately hard by the Bank. An archway and old stones in a patched wall are all that remain of the once famous abbey. Bede tells several stories of it : how it was indicated by a heavenly light where the bodies of the nuns should be buried in the monastery of Barking ; how a little boy, dying in the same monastery, called upon a virgin that was to follow him, and another at the point of leaving her body saw some small part of the future glory ; of the signs which were shown from Heaven when the mother of that congregation departed this life ; and how a blind woman, praying in the burial-place of that monastery, was restored to sight.

Dr. Barnardo has established a very pleasant nunnery—his Village Home for Girls—at Barking Side, in disafforested Hainault Forest, where Fairlop Fair used to be held under a huge oak nearly two thousand years old, which was blown down about sixty years ago. Great Ilford also used to belong to the parish of Barking, and contains an almshouse built by one of its abbesses. The Ilford brick-fields have proved rich in fossil bones and implements in flint and bronze. The teeth of four or five-score elephants have been found there.

On the road from Barking to Dagenham there stands back from the road, with fat-soiled fields and moist pastures in its rear, an old red brick manor-house, where, according to one account, the Gunpowder Plot was concocted, according to another was discovered, according to a third the conspirators assembled on the roof to watch for the glare of the explosion in the western sky. These stories have somehow grown out of the fact that Lord Monteaule lived in the house at the time of the plot. Dagenham is chiefly famous for its breach, first formed by a storm in the fourteenth century, but increased by another in the beginning of the eighteenth from 60 to 1,000 acres—according to some, 5,000. The greater part of the drowned land was drained by a Captain Perry. Of the water that remains a dock is to be made. In some roundabout fashion the Ministerial fish dinner is traced to an annual feast which the Drainage Commissioners used to hold at Dagenham Breach.

If we follow the high-road north-east from Ilford, we shall come to Romford, famous for its ale. Here Francis Quarles was born, and at

Havering, hard by, Edward the Confessor prayed the nightingales out of the park because they disturbed him at his devotions. In our own time the rustics of the neighbourhood believed that nightingales, swarming outside, never ventured inside the park. At Havering the Confessor is said to have received back the ring which he had given as alms to John the Evangelist, disguised as a beggar, after the consecration of the Evangelist's church at Clavering—*violet meadow*.

If we follow the road south-west we shall reach Stratford, but will only just go into the once old-fashioned town. Tramways run to it now, and on the London side there is a wilderness of dismal works and wharfs. Chaucer's Stratford-atte-Bow is what we call Bow, on the other side of the Lea. The bridge which first joined the two Stratfords was the first stone bridge in England, and, according to some, who traced his arms carved upon it, was built by Alfred the Great. Henry I.'s English Queen seems to have been the real builder.

"The Forest," however, is the part of Essex which Londoners very sensibly go out to see. Epping, which gives the forest its name, is most famed for its sausages. A few fallow-deer may still be found in the forest, but the Epping Hunt has dwindled to a miserable farce. Ivy-clad Chingford Church makes a pretty picture. Not far off there is a lodge, which also would look well in a picture, where Queen Elizabeth used to lie. Tennyson was living at High Beech when he wrote "The Talking Oak." Chigwell is the village where John Willett, who had formerly ruled the Maypole with despotic power, was so sorely bewildered when the rioters made their raid upon him, and yet, in the midst of his wool-gathering, so far preserved his landlord's instincts as to suggest that there was "a trifle of broken glass" to be accounted for. Woodford Church is famous for its big yew-tree. At Snaresbrook lived Thomas Hood, and wrote a novel, "Tylney Hall." Its scenery he took from the neighbourhood, and the title from the name-by-marriage of the occupant of Wanstead House, who played at ducks-and-drakes with the magnificent property he got by his wife, Earl Tylney's heiress. Waltham Abbey used to be in Epping Forest, but, in the way of wood, is chiefly notable now for its willow-beds, which supply the charcoal for its gunpowder factory. The church, which is all that remains of the old abbey, has stonecuts of Æsop's Fables on its wall, and the signs of the zodiac on its roof.

From Waltham Abbey in Essex it is easy to pass to Waltham Cross hard by in Hertfordshire, "that fine corn country," as Elia calls it in his delightful essay "Mackary End."

Waltham Cross has one of the Eleanor Crosses—the devoted queen's body was placed at an inn still called the "Four Swans." Although the sign is the same, the house has been rebuilt. The town, however, is said to take its name from the cross-roads on which it stands. In Cheshunt (best known now for Lady Huntingdon's College), of whose parish Waltham once formed a part, Richard Cromwell, ex-Protector, died as "Mr. Clarke," *ætat.* eighty. At Totteridge lived Lady Rachel Russell and Richard Baxter. At Barnet, Warwick the Kingmaker was defeated, and Oliver Twist fell in with the Artful Dodger. To those who remember it in the old coaching days, Barnet seems now, except at fair-time, a strangely quiet town.

Hence we pass into Middlesex. Enfield House was the nursery of Henry VIII.'s children. Lord Beaconsfield's father was born at Enfield, in this well-wooded part of the country Lord Chatham and Charles and Lamb resided, and Marryat and Babbage went to school together. At Edmonton, Charles Lamb lies buried, with his sister, the Bridget Elia to whom he devoted his life. Lamb's then "young friend," Thomas Hood, lived in the neighbourhood. Southgate was the south entrance to Enfield Chase. The broadest oak in the kingdom stands in Michenden Park. Colney Hatch Asylum is not exactly a blot on the green undulating landscape; but to one wandering outside, almost as free as the summer wind, it is dreary to think of those two thousand prisoners with minds distraught, whose seemingly meaningless cries at times ring out to mar the birds' melodious harmony.

On Muswell Hill—not beautified by the Alexandra Palace—stands a little ivied, though modern, church, of which the present Bishop of London was the first incumbent. Dr. Johnson used to walk with Beauclerc under trees now included in the park of the Alexandra Palace. The ancient tower of Hornsey's modern church is completely covered with ivy. Rogers is buried in the tree-shaded churchyard, once free for children to make daisy-chains upon the graves, but now the grass is fenced in with stiff iron rails. A daughter of Thomas Moore is buried near. Lalla Rookh Cottage still tells of Moore's residence in Hornsey—then an almost perfect English village, now sadly cut up and cockney-fied: under any circumstances, a curious place for a quasi-Persian poem to be composed in!

The Mosel, or Musel, which rises on the top of Muswell Hill, flows down to Tottenham. Rowland Hill, of Penny Postage fame, was a master at its well-known school, Bruce Castle. Robert Bruce once



Hampstead Heath.

possessed a share of Tottenham Manor. Tottenham High Cross was another of the resting-places of the body of Queen Eleanor. Wood Green is a colony of almshouses. Highgate is well worth visiting, not merely for the sake of Cromwell (Ireton) House, and other fine old historical mansions, and its picturesque cemetery, but for its old-fashioned High Street—as sleepy as if it were scores of miles away in the Midlands. A long paper would be too short to treat of the illustrious dead who are buried in the cemetery. Coleridge, his daughter, and her husband (and cousin), are buried in the ground of the old chapel. The new chapel of Sir Roger Cholmondeley's Grammar School covers, I believe, their graves. The cemetery marches with the pleasant grounds of Holly Lodge, the residence of Lady Burdett Coutts, the builder of Holly Village, a cluster of picturesque dolls' houses, whose rent-paying tenants would be rather angry if they knew that they are generally supposed to be decayed pensioners of the benevolent Baroness. The whilom Fox on West Hill has called itself the "Fox and Crown" ever since its landlord stopped the runaway horses of the Queen. On Highgate Hill proper there still stands a Whittington's Stone. Last century fashionable people went to Hampstead Wells to drink the water, and on a larger scale, and unconsciously on their part, Hampstead Heath is still one of the favourite health resorts of Londoners. The manor, rather curiously, belongs to the family which owns that of Blackheath. Thanks to the Board of Works, both are saved from further enclosure. Artists, as well as holiday-makers, love Hampstead, and no wonder, both for itself and its surroundings. Constable is buried, Collins, Wilkie, Blake, Stanfield lived, there; Crabbe, Leigh Hunt, and Keats in modern times, and Gay, Steele, and Johnson before them, visited, lodged, or lived at Hampstead. Steele's cottage on Haverstock Hill, like Andrew Marvell's on Highgate Hill, was pulled down within the last few years. Bishop Butler lived where the Soldiers' Daughters' Home now stands. In coming to the Heath from Highgate, either by the meadows or Hampstead Lane, we pass Caen Wood, in which stands Lord Mansfield's mansion, which, like his house in Bloomsbury Square, would have been burnt to the ground in 1780, had not the landlord of the "Spaniards" Inn stopped the "No Popery" rioters on their march by having a hogshead of ale rolled into the road, and knocking in its head. Whilst Hugh of the "Maypole," Dennis, Tappertit, and Co., were carousing, the soldiers, for whom a messenger had galloped into London without drawing rein, arrived, and saved Caen House.

At Finchley, which Hogarth has made famous, there is an oak behind which Dick Turpin used to lie in wait. (In Bickerton Road, Upper Holloway, there stands another, pollarded, which once shaded a bridle-path through then well-timbered, now brick-and-mortar-covered country, along which he has often galloped when on his way to Finchley Common.)

In Edgware, now easily reached, through pleasant country, by the Great Northern Railway, stands the forge which gave, or is said to have given—the whole story has been scornfully pronounced a myth—Handel, sheltering from a shower, the idea of his "Harmonious Blacksmith." The blacksmith was parish clerk of Whitchurch hard by, where Handel was organist. It was at Whitchurch that the Duke of Chandos, Queen



Fulham Church.

Anne's Paymaster and Handel's patron, built his palace, with its hinges and locks of silver, its marble pillars and flights of stairs. Swiss guards escorted this magnificent Paymaster to church. When his riches took unto themselves wings, his palace was pulled to pieces, and its contents dispersed by auction. Its statue of George I. was that unfortunate stiff-pigtailed production of the sculptor's art which was so long pilloried in Leicester Square. Lord Chesterfield bought the marble staircase for his house in Mayfair. The marble columns went to Wanstead House.

Harrow, thanks to its famous school and scholars, needs only to be referred to. It may be mentioned, however, that John Lyon, the founder of the school (who, surely, must have been a cockney), required the parents of its pupils to equip them with bows and *arrows*; and that a

silver arrow used to be shot for every 4th of August by picked marksmen from the school. Twyford (Twoford), on the Brent, is a parish which seventy years ago contained only one house, and had church service once a month. The population now is under fifty, and there is service in summer only in the funny little ivy-covered chapel. The tenant of the manor-house, called the Abbey, has to "find" the clergyman. A neighbouring parish, Perivale, is still smaller, its population not amounting to twoscore. Willesden, which converging railways, scoring its green meadows with their maze, have recently startled out of its rural dreaminess



Strawberry Hill, Twickenham.

with shouts of "Change here for the main-line," etc., etc., is a most ecclesiastical manor, belonging to St. Paul's, and furnishing titles for eight of its prebends.

It was at Heston Sir Thomas Gresham had a wall built in a night to divide one of his courts which Queen Elizabeth had called too large. Heston corn at one time was used exclusively for the making of bread which was to find its way to the mouths of English crowned heads. In Heston parish is Hounslow Heath, once notorious for highwaymen, and the gibbets from which they hung in chains.

At Hanwell, Jonas Hanway, who invented the umbrella and helped

to found the Marine Society, is buried. At Acton, Cromwell was met by a long procession of carriages on his return from Worcester Fight. Sir Matthew Hale, Richard Baxter, Henry Fielding, are a few of the people of celebrity who have lived at Acton.

And now let us go up the river, mentioning in turn the rural places worthy of note upon the Middlesex bank. Hoary Fulham Church and its lime-shaded churchyard are worth a visit. Into the grounds of Fulham Palace, on whose green lawns at boat-race-time clergymen and their fair friends look like an incongruous assemblage of rooks and birds of



Hampton Court—Garden Entrance.

Paradise (Fulham, by the way, means *birds' home*), Bishop Grindall first introduced the tamarisk-tree. Richardson lived at Parson's Green. Hammersmith, notwithstanding the old-fashioned look of its Mall, in whose Retreat George MacDonald lived, and William Morris lives, has ceased to be rural. Thomson is said to have written part of "The Seasons" in the "Doves" public house. The history of Brandenburg House—pulled down to furnish sites for a madhouse and a workhouse—is a chequered one. It was erected in Charles I.'s reign by Sir Nicolas Crispe, who is buried in Hammersmith Church. From him it passed to Prince Rupert, who gave it to the actress Margaret Hughes. In 1748 it became the property of Lord Melcomb, who beautified it and called it La Trappe. Then the Margrave of Anspach, when he had sold his dominions to the

King of Prussia, bought it, and called it Brandenburg House. He left it to his widow, formerly Lady Craven, who gave dramatic entertainments of her own composing and acting in it; and afterwards it became the residence of Queen Caroline. At Chiswick, with its swan-haunted ait, Hogarth lived, and is buried. Unsavoury Brentford we will skip. Sion House, seat of the Percys, is the lion of Isleworth, and has the old Northumberland House lion mounted on it. It was once a nunnery. Catherine Howard was held in detention there. Catherine of Arragon lived for a time at Twickenham. "Wager" Byron and Kitty Clive are buried there. The other associations of the place are too well known to need to be re-enumerated. At Teddington the Thames ceases to feel the action of the tides. Some writers have derived its name from this circumstance, but later philologists call the etymology absurd. From Teddington we can stroll along the noble chestnut avenue of Bushey Park to Hampton Court (too familiar to Londoners to need description), and thus complete our Emerald Ring,—the Thames forming a silver link between the Middlesex and Surrey ends of the hoop.



AN ADVENTURE IN AFRICA.

CHILDREN, when you sat wishing,
 Down last night on the sands,
 Beckoning moments of glory
 With little helpless hands,
 I heard you saying and sighing,
 As the wind went over the seas,
 "There never will come knights-errant
 To common days like these!"

I heard you sighing and saying,
 "The beautiful time is gone
 When heroes hunted for monsters,
 And conquered them one by one;
 And now there is nothing noble,
 And we all lie safe at night,
 But we would not mind a monster
 If we could have a knight!"

Then taking breath for a moment,
 You all stood up and said,
 "Remember Garibaldi!
 Not all the knights are dead:
 A chief for men to follow,
 Who never lingers nor halts;
 A king for women and children,
 Because he has no faults.

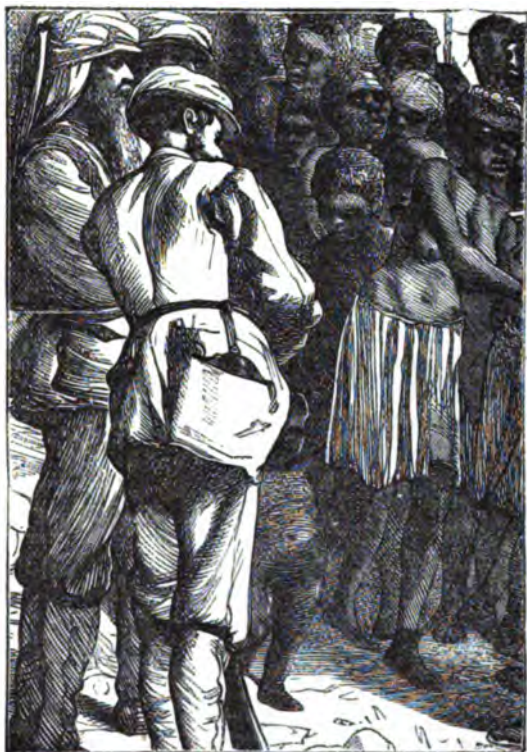
"But he is nothing to England!
 There is the thought that smarts
 We want an English hero
 To trouble all our hearts."
 Ah, children! who could tell you
 That hearts grow sick and cold,
 Without the healing trouble
 That touched the waters of old?

Shake not your heads at England,
 Her soil is still of worth;
 It cannot lose the habit
 Of bringing heroes forth.
 I met one yesterday evening,
 And when you hear his tale,
 You'll not be sighing and saying
 That times are feeble and pale.

The wind was soft and heavy
 Where African palm-trees tower,
 Hardly stirring the river,
 Hardly shaking a flower;
 The night was grave and splendid,
 A dead queen lying in state,
 With all her jewels upon her,
 And trumpets at her gate.

The wild notes waved and lingered,
 And fainted along the air,
 Sometimes like defiance,
 And sometimes like despair;

When down the moonlit mountain,
And beside the river-calms,
The line of a dismal procession
Unwound between the palms.



A train of driven captives,
Weary, weak, amazed,—
Eighty hopeless faces,
Never once upraised;
Bleeding from the journey,
Longing for the grave:
Men and women and children,
Every one a slave.

Lashed and crying and crouching,
 They passed, suspecting not
 There were three or four English
 Whose hearts grew very hot,—
 Men who had come from a distance,
 Whose lives were in their hands,
 To tell the love of Jesus
 About the heathen lands.

Studious men and gentle,
 But not in the least afraid;
 With fire enough amongst them
 To furnish a crusade.
 And when they saw the slave-troop
 Come hurrying down the hill,
 Each man looked at the other,
 Unable to be still.

They did not care for treaties,
 And death they did not fear;
One great wrong would have roused them,—
 There were eighty here.
 They were not doing man's work,
 They were doing the Lord's;
 So they went and stopped the savages
 With these amazing words:—

“We are three or four English,
 And we CANNOT LET THIS BE,—
 Get away to your mountains,
 And set the people free!”
 You should have seen the black men,
 How grey their faces turn;
 They think the name of England
 Is something that will burn.

They break, they fly like water
 In a rushing, mighty wind;
 The slaves stretch out uncertain hands,
 By long despair made blind,

Till in a wonderful moment
The gasp of freedom came,
Like the leap of a tropical sunrise,
That sets the world aflame.

A blast of weeping and shouting
Cleansed all the guilty place ;
And God was able to undraw
The curtain from His face
A hundred years of preaching
Could not proclaim the creed
Of Love and Power and Pity
So well as that one deed.

A glorious gift is Prudence ;
And they are useful friends
Who never make beginnings
Till they can see the ends ;
But give us now and then a man,
That we may make him king,
Just to scorn the consequence,
And just to DO THE THING.



ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES.

I.

DAY was just breaking. Already the hazy light faintly marking the outline of the horizon announced the approach of a glorious Indian sunrise. The stars faded away one by one till the magnificent Southern Cross alone was left to struggle with the all-powerful sunbeams.

Not a sound disturbed the quiet of the pure fresh air. The jungle, which but now resounded with the noisy yells of jackals and the dismal howling of hyænas, was silent. Its wild inhabitants were hastening back to their dens, and here and there furtive shadows glided rapidly through the underwood.

Absolute silence always marks the short space of time which alone separates the darkest night from broad daylight in India. No gradual dawn here, no slow transition ; when the first rays of sunlight have fired the light mantle of clouds which act as vanguard to the sun, then only does Nature awake and seem to rally from the fright in which the terrible dangers of darkness have plunged her.

The sacred monkey, the *langour*, which the ancient Brahmins called Tchoubdar de Sourya (the Herald of the Sun), is the first to salute the dazzling orb with a guttural, prolonged "hou." At this salute, as though



" His body was bent beneath the weight of two large baskets."

by magic, the wood resounds with a thousand cries, and the sunrise is accompanied by a deafening concert.

But no sound has as yet been heard. The bare, immense plain stretching far and wide was still dark and silent. One human being alone, an old man, was walking with difficulty along the road bordering the right bank of the Ganges. His body was bent beneath the weight of two large baskets, which, after the Indian custom, he carried balanced at either end of a long flexible bamboo.

From time to time the old man stopped for a moment to rest his burden on the ground. Then, straightening himself up again, he seemed to scan the horizon anxiously. The first rays of light casting a rosy glow over his bronzed lean body, scantily covered with rags, gave the traveller a strangely fantastic appearance. He was undoubtedly some beggar wan-

dering along the roads, and yet his emaciated features, framed by a long white beard, had a look of haughty pride, worthy rather of a priest of one of the mysterious rites which divide the vast Hindoo peninsula.

Priest or beggar, the old man must have made a long journey, for he seemed worn-out with fatigue, and his burden drew from him frequent groans.

He was thus walking slowly along, following the bank overhanging the Ganges, when he came suddenly upon a deep ravine, a kind of creek, which, separating itself from the river, ran some distance inland. The road, a simple towing-path, thus interrupted, must, for want of a bridge, have skirted the ravine, the bottom of which was covered with stagnant water and crowded with vegetation. Nevertheless, the creek was but a few yards wide, the water seemed to be shallow, and a path scarcely discernible bore witness that more than one eager traveller had not allowed himself to be balked by this slight obstacle.

Our stranger was undoubtedly not of this opinion, for the sight of the ravine drew from him a cry of despair, and, letting his baskets slip to the ground, he began to bewail his fate.

"By my divine Mother Parbati," cried he, "shall I never then reach the end of my journey? Since sunset have I been walking along the banks of the Ganges" (S'ri Ganga), "and it will be daylight before I find a lodging for myself and companions. At the crossing of the road to Cawnpore, I saw a Brahmin reading his *slokas** before the *dēota*, protector of the road. I went up to him and humbly asked permission to warm my benumbed limbs at the fire before the altar. But he answered me in a haughty tone, 'Away with thee, unclean *Nāt* / thy contact would profane the flame destined for the divine Karticeia.' That man little knew my power. I could have punished him, but I had pity on him. And since then I have walked without resting, and now behold me stopped by this cursed *nullah*,† when I can see yonder an hospitable roof. O Siva! inspire thy servant. May I trust my feeble body in these dark waters, the abode of the terrible *maghar*? "‡

But Siva making no answer, our friend, urged by his desire to reach as soon as possible the house he saw in the distance, resumed his burden, and, leaning on his staff, he descended the bank of the ravine with a

* The sacred texts of India are divided into *slokas*, or verses.

† The word *nullah* is usually applied to a deep stream flowing between high banks; but the Hindoos apply it generally to all fissures of land of any extent.

‡ The *maghar* is a crocodile with triangular jaw, peculiar to the rivers of Northern India.



"It tried by sharp tugs to drag away his victim."

trembling step. On reaching the edge of the marsh, he sounded the depth with his staff, then, again calling upon Siva, he bravely entered the water.

His feet slipped on the muddy bottom, the tall lotus-stems impeded his movements, but notwithstanding these obstacles the old man reached the other side. He had already set one foot on dry ground when the hideous head of an enormous crocodile appeared above the surface of the stream. Its horrible jaws, armed with teeth, opened, and snapped at the leg just out of the water. The poor traveller sank on the ground with a cry of pain; his baskets, thrown to some distance, flew open, and set at liberty a swarm of serpents of all colours and sizes, who rapidly dispersed among the tall grass.

However, the unlucky man in falling had clutched at a tuft of *kalam*s,* whose tall stout stems bordered the edge of the *nullah*. The crocodile, astonished at meeting with resistance, collected its strength to draw its prey into the water. Urged by its voracity, it half raised its body out of the mud, and tried, by sharp tugs, to drag away its victim.

This silent struggle lasted for some moments; the old man, well-nigh exhausted, was visibly losing ground, when, suddenly letting go his hold, he turned towards his enemy, and, taking its head in his hands, put out both its eyes.

The monster, roaring with pain, opened its jaws, abandoned its prey, and plunged back into the muddy water of the *nullah*, where it immediately disappeared.

Notwithstanding the horrible wound by which his leg was torn, the poor traveller hastily dragged himself away from the edge of the water. Before, however, climbing the steep bank which separated him from the plain, he began to look for his baskets. He soon found them under some bushes, but the sight of them drew from him fresh groans: the baskets were open and apparently empty.

"Alas!" cried the old man, raising his hands to the sky; "alas! they are all gone, all my good companions, my best friends!"

And his voice, lowered to a soft caressing tone, seemed to be addressed to the underwood.

"All gone! Why, O mighty Siva, hast thou snatched me from the jaws of the cruel *maghar*, since thou dost thus rob me of all I love? My

* The *kalam* is a kind of grass which grows abundantly in Northern India. Its fine pliant stem has served from time immemorial as pens for the Hindoo scribe. The origin of the Latin word *calamus* may be easily traced to this source.

serpents, Rama, give me back my serpents ; restore to me my only means of earning bread ! ”

All at once there was a slight rustle in the grass, and a magnificent black cobra of the most formidable species glided slowly to the old man's feet. Raising its body and puffing out its hood, it made a gentle hissing sound.

At this well-known call the poor charmer, wiping away his tears, knelt down, and in a caressing tone said, “ Ah, there thou art, my beautiful Sâprani,* my beloved queen. I knew well that thou at least wouldst never abandon me.”

And taking the reptile with precaution, instead of placing it in one of the baskets, he wound it among the rags round his breast. The venomous creature coiled itself round without any resistance, as though it were well accustomed to that resting-place.

In vain the old man, taking his *toumril*,† which hung at his side, endeavoured to recall his serpents by all the seductions of music ; in vain did he afterwards make them the most extravagant promises : the echo alone answered his words. At last he determined to take up his staff and baskets, and with difficulty he reached the top of the ravine.

The sun had risen, and its rays were burnishing the plain ; not a cloud appeared in the sky. The old charmer had soon regained the road which he had so unfortunately quitted ; but once there, exhausted with fatigue and pain, he stood still, put down his burden, and stretched himself on the steep bank-side bordering the road.

It would have taken but little time now to reach the longed-for shelter, for at scarcely more than half a mile rose a spacious mansion, which it was easy to recognize as the dwelling-place of European planters. But his last efforts had been too much for the poor wanderer. Mournful, resigned, and overwhelmed with the weight of his misfortune, he waited for the help of Providence.

All at once the gay sound of flutes and cymbals roused him from his lethargy. At the end of the road coming from Cawnpore might be seen a numerous band of people, half hidden from view in a cloud of dust, which in the sunlight looked like a column of fire.

The troop passed close to the beggar. In front walked, or rather ran, keeping time to the music, some young Hindoos, dressed in short silk

* *Sâprani*, literally queen of serpents.

† The *toumril* is a short flute which Indian charmers use, and which produces a sound very much like the *binion* of Brittany, although much softer.

tunics, their long hair flowing from beneath golden caps. They were playing gaily, some on the fife, others the *tam-tam* or cymbals. Following them came a score of horsemen, glittering with gold and armed with lances with scarlet pennons, surrounding a superb elephant richly caparisoned, and carrying a *haodah* of massive gold.*

On the *haodah*, reclining carelessly among the velvet cushions, was a young man, sheltered from the sun by a heavy brocade umbrella, which a slave held over his head. From his turban, with its thick gold fringe, a spectator acquainted with Indian etiquette would have recognized this man as a prince of the royal family, whilst the triple silken cord hanging on his breast indicated that the prince belonged to the sacred caste of Brahmins.

This young man was, in fact, none other than the high and mighty Doundou Pant Rao, heir-presumptive to the great empire of the Maharattas, and last *peichva* or high priest. But of all these titles none now remained to him except that of Lord of Bihtoor, a small appanage on the banks of the Ganges, the sole compensation that the English had made him for the immense empire they had wrested from his father.

Notwithstanding this spoliation the prince passed as a firm partisan of the new governors of India. He was seen courting their acquaintance, mingling in their festivities, and this very day he was on his way back from Cawnpore, where he had spent the night in the midst of brilliant English society, gathered together by General Wheeler, the commander of the Cawnpore garrison.

The *soirée* must have been charming, to judge from the merry laughter occasioned by the accounts the prince was giving his companions.

Doundou, with animated countenance and flashing eyes, was describing the splendours of the drawing-rooms of his European hosts, the magnificence of their toilet, and the amiability of their manners; at the same time his enthusiasm, too often approaching irony, seemed to try to excite covetousness rather than admiration.

Suddenly a deep groan was heard amidst the laughter of the merry band. All were silent at a gesture from the prince, who, quickly raising himself, perceived the beggar crouching by the road-side and holding out beseeching hands to him.

"Who is that man?" cried Doundou, in a ringing voice.

* The *haodah* is an immense saddle placed on the back of elephants. For the wealthy it is, in fact, a throne, sometimes of gold or silver, and surmounted with a pavilion. Most frequently it is only a kind of couch, which will hold five or six persons.

"Oh, my lord, it is Mali," said the old man; "Mali, the serpent-charmer, who bows before your Highness, imploring pity!"

"And what art thou doing here on the road-side? Why hast thou quitted thy sorcerer's den so early?" impetuously demanded the prince.

"My lord, be it as you will, but I am no sorcerer. It is from mighty Siva, from the dread Mahadeo, that I hold my mysterious power over creeping reptiles. Last month I went to the fair at Holi, which is held, as you know, every five years in the plain of Kajraha. I went there according to venerable custom to make my serpents dance before the red Kali, but the zeal of the faithful grows colder every day. The offerings were small, and after a long and fruitless journey, I hoped to reach my poor hovel this very day, when, this morning at daybreak, in attempting to cross the *nullah*, I was suprised by a crocodile. Thanks to invincible Siva, I saved my life, but my leg was crushed, and I cannot move. Have pity, Bahadour, come to my aid, and order your men to carry me to that house just near here. I am sure the generous *sahibs* will willingly give me food and allow me to rest awhile."

"Indeed!" remarked the prince, in a sarcastic tone. "Thou art a fine talker, Mali. I was not aware till now thou hadst that accomplishment; thou must have picked it up during thy sojourn in the towns of the generous *sahibs*. I no more doubt their generosity than thou dost, but in order that thou mayest make one more experiment, thou wilt not be sorry to be left here. I should be afraid thou wouldst have to share with me the gratitude due to them alone. Adieu, father!"

And with an imperious gesture to his driver, Doundou leaned majestically back on his throne. The fifes and cymbals again resounded, and the procession, continuing its way, soon disappeared in a wave of golden dust.

As though urged by despair, the poor charmer stood straight up, brandished his staff for a moment, and took a few steps forward; but overcome with pain, he fell down unconscious across the road.

II.

THE old charmer was not wrong in relying in his distress upon the generosity of the proprietor of the house, which fate had a second time prevented him from reaching.

There indeed lived a *sahib* or European lord, as renowned in all the country for his immense fortune as for his inexhaustible charity, M. Bour-

quien, one of the largest landholders of the Lower Doab. His estates extended along the right bank of the Ganges, and covered a superficial area of more than twenty thousand acres, and his dependants, who numbered some thousands, peopled about thirty villages. Besides this, M. Bourquien was no stranger in the country where he lived, as are the greater part of Europeans, who only come to India to amass large fortunes as rapidly as possible, and then return to their own countries. These temporary masters cultivate the country with avidity, and overwork the natives, by whom they are hated.

To the natives M. Bourquien was more Hindoo than European. They called him *Bour-khan*, a simple phonetic adaptation of his French name, but which no one ever pronounced without ironical emphasis, for *Bour-kahn* signifies in Hindoo the "wicked master," and our planter was adored by his people.

Born in India, he could also boast of bearing the name of a true hero, a name which all patriotic Hindoos venerate to this day, that of General Hector Bourquien, the defender of Aligarh.

This General Bourquien, a Parisian, was one of that brilliant band of French adventurers who, towards the close of the last century, seeing France abandon the splendid Indian empire conquered by Dupleix, enlisted in the service of the Hindoo princes, to carry on the struggle with the English.

Who among us does not know the names of Perron, De Boign, Fantôme, Sombre, Bourquien, and of many other valiant officers who for a moment arrested the British success, and who at least saved the honour of France in the eyes of the Indian people? These French officers transformed the Maharatta army, and created those terrible phalanxes which in twenty battles drove back the English battalions.

The struggle lasted fifteen years, when the defection of Perron proved a fatal blow to the Maharatta cause. General Perron, a simple sergeant in the French army, had attained to a degree of power which made him almost equal with his master. Commander-in-Chief of the armies of Scindia, he was in fact the real Sovereign of Hindostan. English history represents him to us as a haughty, pusillanimous parvenu, but it is allowable to reject this unjust estimate, and to say that Perron's only fault was that he allowed himself to be guided by one absorbing motive, self-interest. Had he better understood his part, he might, with the help of the Sikhs of the Punjab, have completely arrested the British invasion and opened India to France. The capture of Aligarh, which General Bourquien

surrendered to Lord Lake after a prolonged siege, alarmed Perron, who accepted the overtures of Wellington, and, quitting the Maharatta service, retired to Chandragore with a considerable fortune. This defection was the ruin of that brilliant French party who had inspired England with so much alarm. Bourquien endeavoured to continue the struggle; but defeated under the walls of Delhi, he was obliged to beat a retreat. At last, on the 27th October, 1803, the battle of Lasvâri, lost in spite of marvellous feats of valour on the part of the French officers, was a fatal blow to Scindia, who was forced to sue for peace; the most important condition of the treaty being that this prince should banish all Frenchmen from his army.

During his stay in India, Hector Bourquien had married a young princess of the royal family of Holka, who had brought him as dowry the magnificent estate of Gandapoor, situated on the banks of the Ganges between Cawnpore and Bihtoor. After the defeat at Lasvâri, the general obtained permission from the English Government to retire here with his wife and son. The latter after a few years succeeded his father, married the daughter of a rich Brahmin of Benares, and settled permanently at Gandapoor, where he founded an indigo factory, which rapidly attained great prosperity, and which he bequeathed to his only son Armand.

M. Armand Bourquien, heir to an immense fortune, related through his grandmother and mother to the two highest castes of India, might have considered himself more Hindoo than European; but he had never forgotten the land of his ancestors. As soon as he was at liberty to act for himself, he went to France, was married at Paris, his grandfather's native city, and did not return to his adopted country until after an absence of two years. When his son André was twelve years old, he was sent to Paris to finish his education. But after André's departure, great trouble fell upon M. Bourquien. In two years he lost his venerated mother and his beloved wife, who left him alone with a daughter scarcely fourteen years old,—Bertha, a charming child, whom the natives called the Déva of Gandapoor.

Solitude seemed insupportable to the planter, and he decided to send for his son to return at once. Having disembarked at Calcutta, on the 15th January, 1857, André had travelled the nine hundred miles which separated him from Gandapoor in twenty days, and reached home the evening previous to the time at which our story opens.

Never was prince returning to his dominions more cheered nor more fêted by his subjects than was the young *jaghirdar*, Andhra-Sahib, as the

Indians called him, by his father's vassals. People had come from all parts of the district to welcome him, and followed by a procession of several thousand men, and mounted on the finest elephant of the *keddah*, he made his triumphal entry into the factory.

André was then a tall handsome youth of fifteen. His bronzed face and aquiline features, lighted up by fine blue eyes, seemed to unite all the beauty of both types, Hindoo and French, which at first sight appear to us so distinct, and which, nevertheless, are but two of the purest and most elevated branches of the same tree—of the same race. At Paris his companions had nicknamed him Rajah; but though he had somewhat the haughty bearing of an Indian noble, he was none the less a frank, unselfish, good-hearted lad, and he had left France regretted by all who knew him.

As for André, Paris had greatly astonished him; but it was rather surprise than enthusiasm. Accustomed to wander at his own free-will over his father's immense estates,—an indefatigable hunter, already well inured, notwithstanding his youth, to encounters with the terrible inhabitants of the jungle, André felt himself cramped in France, where hedges, walls, and barriers checked him at every step. As for the college, it was like prison to him.

His mother had said to him on leaving him at Calcutta, "Remember, my handsome André, you are but a savage now, and to be worthy of the name you bear you must become a civilized man. To be that, you must work and study well, for it is by moral superiority alone we deserve to command those around us."

"I will work, dear mother," was his simple reply.

And he worked as he had promised, courageously putting up with his prison, remembering his mother's words. Nevertheless, he had joyously hailed his father's order to return, and since he had set foot again on Indian soil his enthusiasm was inexhaustible.

The day following his return, burning with the desire to see once again all the places which filled his mind with pleasant and now far-off memories, he rose before daybreak, and ran to the stable to saddle his horse Jaldi. Whilst he was doing this as noiselessly as possible, in order not to awaken any one in the house, he heard a hurried step outside, and soon his sister's lovely face appeared at the door.

"Oh! the naughty boy!" cried the young girl, whilst he tenderly kissed her. "What do you mean by running off in search of adventure directly you get home, and leaving your old playfellow behind?"

"Not so, little sister. I scarcely closed my eyes all night. I was burning with impatience, and directly day broke I could stay indoors no longer, so I came out to get my horse to have a good canter, thinking to be back again before you were up."

"Idle excuses, sir; and as a punishment I condemn you to saddle my little mare Nila, and escort me wherever I think best to go."

"I accept the punishment most willingly, and hasten to do your command;" and having kissed Bertha again, André quickly saddled both horses.

A few minutes later the young people were galloping across the country.



The sun, already just above the horizon, gilded the fan-shaped summits of the taras-palms, leaving in shadow, enveloped in bluish vapours, the luxuriant vegetation which concealed the ground. The vast even plain stretched as far as the eye could reach, covered with splendid crops. Here were fields of barley, waving above the horses' heads; or fine indigo-plants, with golden plumes; farther off extended, like flower-beds, long rows of those many-coloured poppies from which the loathsome opium is extracted; then came fields of sugar-cane, and corn-fields, intersected here and there by groves of fig-trees, guavas, and oranges. In a word, the soil groaned beneath the weight of its wealth.

André greeted each new sight with enthusiastic cries, which astonished his sister.

"But, little sister," said he to her, "how is it you do not wish me to go into raptures over this glorious land, or shout for joy when I see its splendours? It all seems so natural and simple to you because you have never seen anything else."

"But our France must be a beautiful country," replied the young girl with a sigh.

"Certainly, my dear Bertha, France is a fine country, undoubtedly the richest in Europe, and if India were cultivated as it is, it would support a thousand millions of human beings, instead of the two hundred millions of its present population. But how can France be compared to this country, where everything is grand and gigantic? The Alps might be hidden in a nook of our Himalaya, and it would take the Seine and the Garonne, with the Loire and the Rhine added, to equal our Ganges. Whilst the sun continually fertilizes our soil, and vegetation is ever new, yonder the sky is always covered with dark clouds, through which, from time to time, the pale sunbeams glimmer. During the summer, rainy days are not infrequent, but as soon as winter comes life seems to be suspended. The dim sunlight shows itself for a few hours from time to time; the trees are stripped of their leaves, no more fruit, no more flowers; and soon the earth is covered with a white mantle of snow, the frozen rivers seem to stop their currents of their own accord, and the people shut themselves up indoors, or only come out covered with thick clothes, which hardly protect them from colds and all kinds of horrid illness!"

"Oh, you make me shiver!" cried Bertha.

"It is true that the luxuries of refined civilization soften the hardships of that climate," continued André; "and the French, far from considering themselves unfortunate, as one might think, congratulate themselves, and with some reason, on inhabiting such a country. More numerous wants have made them laborious and ingenious. Whilst here the native contents himself with girding his loins with a strip of cloth, and protects his head with a light turban, a little fruit suffices him for food, and a roof of foliage shelters him; yonder, man has need of warm clothing, strengthening food, and a house where he may spend the greater part of his life. No one can be idle in France; the struggle for life is going on perpetually, and from this struggle springs the highest degree of civilization in the world. But I am philosophizing like a professor instead of simply admiring all around me, without envying or pitying those who want neither pity nor envy."

Just then this fine speech was interrupted by the sound of fifes and



“‘ I wish you welcome on your return to our blessed land.’ ”

cymbals, and the young people perceived the *cortège* of the Prince of Bihtoor at no great distance from them.

"Who are all those fine folks?" asked André of his sister.

"It is our neighbour Doundou Pant, who is undoubtedly returning from Cawnpore," replied Bertha.

The procession, hidden for a moment behind a thick clump of palms, came out at a few yards from them. Above the noise of cymbal and fife rose a tumult of laughter and voices. At the sight of André and Bertha holding their horses on one side the road all were suddenly silent.

A few moments later the elephant carrying the prince stopped before the young people.

"Out so early?" said Doundou to André, in a familiar tone. "I wish you welcome on your return to our blessed land, Andhra Sahib. May you follow out here the traditions of your ancestor, the friend and supporter of the Peichvas. You know the way to the palace of Bihtoor, do you not? I intend to invite all the *élite* of English society there, and I hope that you and yours will be foremost among them."

"My father will, I have no doubt, be happy to accept your kind invitation, and his children will be delighted to accompany him to your palace," simply replied André.

"Well, I hope soon to see you again, then," said the prince; and bowing to the brother and sister with a gracious smile, he signed to his driver to proceed. The sun was now high in the heavens, and Bertha reminded her brother that it was time for them to go back home, where their father would be impatiently waiting for them.

"But the Ganges, my dear Bertha!" exclaimed André. "I have not yet cast eyes on our father Ganges, as our Indians say. Only think, it is to him we owe all our wealth, and that it needs but an outburst of his anger to deprive us of everything. I cannot defer my visit, and I should be truly afraid of offending the all-powerful son of Siva. Come along; a good gallop and we are there—unless," said he, merrily, "the fair Bertha is afraid of the burning rays of fair Phœbus."

But the young girl had already spurred her horse, and the two riders were soon far away. The magnificent river lay before them, majestically rolling its broad expanse of blue water in the sunlight, when Jaldi, André's horse, shied so suddenly that the young man, notwithstanding his firm seat, was almost thrown from his saddle. He was steadying himself on his steed and patting it soothingly, when, turning round, he saw his sister holding in her horse with a look of fear.

"What is the matter, little sister?" cried he. "Have you become frightened as well? Jaldi has undoubtedly forgotten me, but I will soon teach him that I am not going to be thrown quite so easily as he thinks."

"But look, look, brother!" gasped the young girl, pointing before her and turning away her eyes with horror.

André then perceived the body of a man lying across the road almost under Jaldi's feet. In an instant he had sprung to the ground, and throwing his bridle to Bertha, he went up to the poor man. Raising him with difficulty, he dragged him to the side of the road, and placed him gently on the bank. He was soon certain that the man was alive, although his clothes were stained with blood, which flowed from a large wound in his leg.

Leaving the wounded man in charge of his sister, who, now reassured, had dismounted and come to her brother's assistance, André ran to the river; and having dipped his handkerchief in the water, he bound it round the poor man's brow. It had an almost instantaneous effect. The old charmer heaved a sigh, opened his eyes, and looked wonderingly at the two young people.

"Ah, the *sahibs*!" said he.

"Yes, my poor man, we are *sahibs*," said André; "but we wish you no harm. What has happened to you to bring you into this state?"

"I was seized by a crocodile at break of day in trying to cross the *nullah*," replied Mali; "and I have no strength left to continue my journey."

"But if the accident happened to you at daybreak," said Bertha, "how is it that no passer-by has helped you?"

"Prince Doundou went by here, but he only laughed at my misfortune," replied the old man.

"How dreadful!" exclaimed Bertha. "Well, we will not follow his example. We are going to take you to our house, and I am sure my father will not refuse to welcome you."

"You are very kind, dear young lady," replied Mali; "but I am so weak, it would be impossible for me to reach your father's bungalow. Leave me here, but I pray you send me a little food by one of your servants. After a day's rest I shall be able to go on my way, and I hope to get back to my hut to-morrow."

"I will not hear of that, my good man," said André. "The heat of the sun might inflame your wound, and, in any case, you could not walk.

in this state. I am going to help you to get on my horse, and then we shall be able to reach the factory."

"Ride on your horse! You cannot surely think of such a thing, my lord!" cried Mali. "You do not know that I am but a beggar—a simple *Nât*."

"Beggar or *Nât*, you are going to mount my horse," repeated André. "I will have it so."

André's decided tone seemed to convince the old man; and again stammering some excuse, he raised himself with a groan, and, assisted by the brother and sister, mounted Jaldi. André took Jaldi's bridle, Bertha followed on horseback, and thus the little band set out on their way home.

It was certainly a touching spectacle to see this miserable beggar thus escorted, but to one acquainted with the customs of India, and knowing what a great gulf separates the different castes of this country, it was a most impressive sight; for they who were thus caring for the old charmer—the representative of a despised race—were the *sahibs*, that is to say, lords, the all-powerful masters of the country.

Thus, great was the surprise of the numerous servants when they saw this singular procession enter the courtyard of the factory. The young people had not misjudged their father's hospitality, by whose order old Mali was soon comfortably installed in one of the farm cottages, and surrounded by all the care his case required.

III.

THE following morning André and Bertha eagerly went to inquire after their poor *protégé*. As they were leaving the bungalow they met the *hakim* or native doctor, who had been hastily sent for on the previous day to attend to the wounded man. The doctor had nothing but good news to give them. The crocodile's horrible bite had simply torn the flesh without damaging the bones. The wound itself, although large, was not serious; the dressing seemed to have produced an excellent effect already. In short, Mali would be quite well again after a few days' compulsory rest.

Delighted with this news, André and Bertha thanked the doctor and went towards the cabin where the sick man lay. As they drew near they thought they could distinguish the old man's voice addressing some stranger. André signed to his sister to listen, and they both stood still near the half-open door.

"So there thou art, my beautiful queen, my faithful companion," the old man was saying. "Whilst the other ungrateful creatures abandoned me in a moment of peril and fled like cowards, thou alone wished to share my misfortune. But now, henceforth, all the caresses and luxuries are for thee. When I go to Benares, I will bring back a fine muslin to decorate thy bed, which thou shalt have all to thyself, and I will ornament my toupil with pieces of coral to charm thine eyes, which are like those of the divine Parvati. And when I have found the fugitives again, for they cannot escape me, I will make them crawl before thee on fête days like slaves."



"Old Mali was looking affectionately at a beautiful black cobra."

Who could this mysterious stranger be to whom the old man was speaking so endearingly? The brother and sister quietly crossed the threshold and cast a timid glance round the room.

Great was their surprise at the sight before them. Half reclining on a mat which, according to the custom of the country, served him as a bed, old Mali, whilst he spoke, was looking affectionately at a beautiful black cobra, the most formidable of Indian serpents, which was coiled round on the ground near him. The reptile, with upraised head and puffed-out hood, was swaying itself backwards and forwards, as though rocked by the sweet music of the old man's praises.

Bertha could not stifle a scream of terror at this sight. Frightened by the noise, the serpent uncoiled itself and disappeared, hissing, beneath the mat. The listeners, finding themselves discovered, entered the cabin.

"Ah ! it is you, my good protectors," said Mali ; "be welcome, and may blue Vichnou grant you a place in Mérou, in reward for all your kindness. Excuse your humble servant if he does not rise to greet you."

As they seemed to hesitate to go nearer him, he added,—

"Do not be alarmed, my kind master and mistress, the good Sâprani knows how to recognize my friends, and she will do you no harm. Our late adventures have made her rather timid, otherwise she would not have stirred when you came in."

"Was it that nasty serpent, then, that you were talking to?" asked Bertha. "I warn you I have a horror of serpents, and papa has given orders that every one found near our house is to be killed."

"There are serpents, and serpents," replied Mali ; "and I am sure your father is too kind ever to order any harm to be done to my poor friend. And you yourself, mademoiselle, when you know my dear Sâprani, I am certain that you will like her."

"I am afraid you are mistaken there, my good man," said André. "My sister is a great coward, and I believe that all the arguments in the world would not make her like a serpent. As for my father, I am quite sure he will protect this one you seem to take so much interest in."

Bertha made a little grimace on hearing her brother criticise her courage, but she did not attempt to protest.

"How do you feel this morning?" André asked the old man. "The doctor has given us a very favourable account of you, and he says you will soon be able to walk about again."

"I still feel very weak," replied Mali ; "and if you will grant me a few days' hospitality——"

"Most certainly," interrupted the young man ; "it is my father's wish that you should stay as long as you like."

"Thank you, my good sir ; but I would ask to continue my journey after resting a day or two. I lost all my serpents except Sâprani at the time of my accident, and I must not delay searching for them. I know they will not be far from the place where I fell, so I expect I shall soon find them."

"What can you want with those horrid creatures?" exclaimed Bertha, with a shudder.

"These horrid creatures, mademoiselle, are my only means of gaining a livelihood. I have trained them to obey me, and I take them about from town to town to exhibit their skill and intelligence. As soon as I have a crowd round me, I place my baskets on the ground, and taking

my *toumril*, I play a melodious air. My cobras immediately begin to move; one by one they come out of their baskets and place themselves at my feet; then, following the modulations of the tune, they raise themselves, puff out their hoods, and dance, keeping time to the music; finally they coil themselves one by one round my body, and form an aureole of hissing heads over my forehead, which makes me look like the terrible Siva himself. Then coins are showered round me, and I am thus able to buy a little rice and milk, enough for myself and reptiles. From Patna to Hardvar, from the Himalaya to the sacred river Ner-budda, every one knows the great charmer Mali. There is not a festival that I am not invited to, for no one can make serpents dance before the altar of red Kali better than myself. My secrets for curing venomous bites and warding off evil spells are renowned. In fact, every one holds me in awe, and though I have never done harm to any one, yet I am despised by all."

"Why do they despise you, my good Mali?" asked André, who seemed to be much interested. "I should have thought that being a beggar you would have been entitled to respect from the Hindoos, who venerate those who disdain the pomps of this world."

"They despise me because I am the faithful priest of a worship which is dying out. Formerly the whole universe inclined before our altars, and the god-serpent clasped the world in its folds. Our venerable mysteries were not only respected on the sacred peninsula of Djambou-dvip, they reigned supreme in the frozen lands from whence came your ancestors."

"Yes," interrupted Bertha; "but according to God's promise, a virgin came who crushed the serpent's head beneath her heel."

"The serpent," continued André with fervour, "might have seemed a suitable god for the first human beings, who, despising their Creator, bowed themselves in fear and trembling before the creature. True, this dread god well personified terror, cunning, and malice, and he has disappeared in darkness before our God, who is light and love and goodness. My poor Mali, be content with making your serpents dance in the public streets, and do not try to raise their altars, which are for ever destroyed." Then seeing the old priest's brow darken, he added, in a calmer voice: "But you promised just now to speak about your favourite cobra. Well, now tell us its story; it cannot fail to be interesting."

These words seemed to restore the old man's serenity, and he began his story without further pressing. Bertha placed herself prudently near the door, whilst André sat down on the mat beside the charmer.

"Two years ago," said Mali, "I was going with my serpents to the fair at Bhilsa. As you undoubtedly know, this town has been celebrated for more than twenty centuries for the wonderful monuments with which it is surrounded, and also for its position at the outlet of the sacred river Betva, which issues from the dark Vindhya at this spot. The surrounding country is one of the wildest tracts of land on the face of the earth. Dense forests cover the mountains, which have no other inhabitants than the Goundnu and the cruel Bhil. I had nothing to dread from these savages, who venerate me as a demigod, and tremble with fear at sight of me; but I had every day to confront dangers none the less terrible—that of meeting with some of the numerous wild beasts which haunt these wilds. Thus I was obliged to make my way with precaution, only travelling by day in the heat of the noonday sun, at which time, as you know, wild beasts never leave their dens.

"However, I arrived safely at a halting-place for Bhilsa, where I learnt that the forest through which I had yet to pass was inhabited by a tiger man-eater, which in the last week had devoured two imprudent travellers. The villagers advised me to change my route; but in order to do that I should have been obliged to skirt the mountain, which would have taken me three days longer. Besides this, the fair opened on the following day; in this case I should have arrived too late for the great ceremony, the purification of the idol, which takes place on the first day, and which never fails to bring me a good sum.

"This thought decided me, and notwithstanding the entreaties of the country people, I bravely set out for the forest. My courage sank in proportion as I penetrated farther into the jungle; but I kept on walking, calling upon the name of the intrepid brothers Pandous. My baskets were very heavy, and impeded my progress. I had a few days previously collected a number of young cobras, still only half tamed, which, added to my old pupils, considerably increased my burden.

"I had been walking for two hours, and was already congratulating myself on my boldness, and so much the more as I thought I could see the outskirts of the forest, when all at once, on turning the corner of a projecting rock, I found myself face to face with the man-eater, a magnificent tiger, as big as a buffalo, which was standing motionless in the centre of the path.

"Seized with fright, I let my baskets fall, which opened and allowed my serpents to escape. I scarcely noticed this fact at the time, and I stood as though petrified, with my eyes fixed on my terrible enemy. He



... What did I see? Saprani was coiled round the wild beast's neck. "

advanced towards me, but I thought neither of flight nor resistance. At a few steps from me he gave a loud roar, and with a bound threw me to the ground. I closed my eyes, and felt stifled beneath the weight of the enormous beast, who was crouching over me with his sharp claws fastened in my chest and legs. However, the monster did not quite kill me, and I was wondering what could have persuaded him thus to prolong my miserable existence, when, to my great surprise, I felt myself free. I opened my eyes; the tiger was rolling on the ground, a few steps from me, as though in a paroxysm of rage. I remained motionless, expecting the tiger would return and devour me; but the monstrous creature did not seem inclined to do me any more harm. For a quarter of an hour he writhed in horrible convulsions, then I saw him fall and lie motionless.

"For a few minutes, perhaps for longer, I lay still on the ground, At last, as nothing stirred, I got up and cautiously approached: the tiger was dead. I fell on my knees to thank Rama for his signal protection, then, having collected my serpents, who had hidden themselves under the brushwood, I put them in my baskets, and was about to hasten from this fatal spot, when I perceived that one of my young cobras, already the most intelligent and affectionate, was missing. I had searched everywhere in vain, when I thought of looking at the tiger again, and what did I then see? Sâprani, my young cobra, was coiled round the wild beast's neck, its venomous fangs deeply planted in the monster's throat. I understood all then,—the man-eater's flight, its convulsions, its death. Sâprani had saved my life!

"When I reached Bhilsa, great were the acclamations of the crowd on learning of the miraculous event. Every one wanted to see the Queen of Serpents: the high priest entertained me in its honour during all my stay; and I left Bhilsa laden with gold and presents. And now, do you still think, mademoiselle, that I ought not to prize this good devoted creature? And see, did not she alone follow me yesterday through all my misfortunes?"

"Yes, you are right," replied Bertha. "I see Sâprani is a good faithful creature, and from to-day I shall have a bowl of milk brought for her as a reward."

"Oh! you may be sure she will thank you heartily for it," said Mali.

At that moment, as though the intelligent creature understood all that was going on, they saw its head appear at the edge of the mat, then, growing bolder, it drew its whole body out and coiled itself round on the floor.

This was too much for Bertha's courage, and hiding her eyes, she quickly made her escape, and ran back to the bungalow.

André, not so easily frightened, wished to examine the singular Sâprani more closely, which she allowed him to do with a very good grace.

. It was a magnificent cobra, two yards long. Its round flexible body was covered with black scales, intermingled with evenly marked yellow spots. But what most astonished the young man was, when, at a sign from its master, the creature spread out the membrane in which its head was encased, and showed the two black circles with which it was adorned, and which has gained for its species the name of spectacled serpents.

"Then has this feeble creature the strength to kill a tiger in a few moments?" asked he of the charmer.

"The tiger bitten by a cobra," replied Mali, "dies in less than a quarter of an hour."

"And a man?" continued André.

"For a man it is different; a few minutes are enough."

"A few minutes!" exclaimed the young man.

"The learned doctors of Calcutta," continued the Hindoo, "affirm that the effect of the cobra's sting operates on a man in a minute and a half."

"How frightful!" exclaimed André. "I hope your Sâprani will be kind enough never to consider me your enemy."

"As to that, you may make your mind easy, my dear *sahib*," promptly replied the old man. "Henceforth, Mali and Sâprani both belong to you, and are free for you to dispose of according to your pleasure."



BAZAARING IN CAIRO.

IT is difficult for any one who has not spent a considerable time in the East to realize, or even to picture to himself, what life means to people who have no penny papers or monthly magazines, no picture exhibitions or fine art sales, who know nothing of Morris papers, Queen Anne furniture, Monday "Pops," or Anti-Restoration squabbles.

When we do see what a drug time is, and how heavily it must hang when no help can be drawn from art, literature, or music, it ceases to be

a matter for wonderment that buying and selling should be not so much a business as an amusement, a regular occupation. Time is not money in Egypt, but money is time, and for a franc an hour's haggling, talk, and compliments may be bought, and is not dear at the price.

Every cake of bread, every stick of candy, even a piastre's worth of tobacco, or a handful of dried beans, is fought over; and if a yard or two of ribbon or a couple of coloured handkerchiefs did not take hours to bargain over for the women whose station does not oblige them to work, the poor creatures would die of *ennui*, as, besides all the business part of the transaction, it gives them an opportunity of meeting their friends, and the merry little cross-legged and veiled women sitting on the "mustahabs" of the shops evidently are thinking and talking of other things than the slippers they are trying on.

This nonchalant way of carrying on business is perhaps one of the great charms of bazaaring in Cairo; for the true Oriental will let a bargain be protracted over days, weeks, and even months if the price be a high one, merely for the pleasure of the gossip, and the cigarettes and coffee consumed in friendly argument. No such thing as a fixed price seems known among them, and most Arabs would prefer making £2 on one article, and losing £1 on another, to selling them respectively at their market value. It is the element of chance, the love of gambling inherent in nine men out of ten of any nationality (excepting perhaps our friends the Scotch), that the bazaar shopkeeper loves, even to his own loss sometimes. There is also little doubt that the true Oriental, who is a Nature's gentleman, is to a certain degree guided by his likes and dislikes in the prices he will accept, so that he delights in fleecing the chaffing, blustering Cockney, or getting a sovereign over price from the hair-splitting American, but is often content with a very small profit from those who answer courtesy with courtesy, and politeness with equal measure. Unfortunately the race is year by year dying out and being supplanted by the tribe of Israel and a horde of Levantines, Italians, and Greeks, whose coarseness and vulgarity stand in distinct contrast with the old-fashioned gentleness and genuine high-breeding of the old stock.

For people passing *en route* to India, or the tourist whose days in Cairo are limited, bazaaring has no charms, but is wearisome, and often distasteful; but for those wintering in Cairo year after year, the long passages with the quaint little shops on either side contain an ever-changing and unfailing source of amusement. Even the approach, with its motley, hustling, and shouting crowd, is not without its interest.



Near Cairo.

Every one who has been in Cairo will know the Mooskee, but for those who have not been there, it may be briefly described as a long and tolerably wide irregular street, with shops on either side lined with Arabs sitting behind their little glass-covered cases or "vitrines," in which is exposed the most heterogeneous collection of native and European productions, —combs, razors, mirrors, pens and pencils, beads, precious stones, bangles, musk-rat tails, rosaries, etc., etc. Overhead is a rude shelter of old planks, laid across from roof to roof, throwing a cool shade down on the passengers, yet admitting the bright sunlight, which darts between the gaps and cracks and shimmers down on the gay-coloured costumes and the old stone gateways with the most delightful light on the parts it touches, and darkest shadows in the porticoes, the lattice-windows, and even the swarthy faces of the people.

In the houses of the Mooskee the ground-floor is mostly used for business, and the apartments above, with projecting balconies over the road, semi-circular and roofed in a rough style, are inhabited by lodgers, mostly Greek, Italian, and Armenian women of a disreputable mien, who smoke and look on the panorama beneath them, forming themselves a part of the great picture, with the extravagant colours of their dresses, as they lean over the railings. From shop-front to shop-front, on strings, and on poles like fishing-rods, the merchants let fly to the wind their gayest wares, and these, streaming to and fro, add not a little to the general effect.

And the people! the Cairene crowd! nowhere is such another, perhaps, as that which throngs the Mooskee, except it be on the great Galata Bridge at Constantinople—Turks and Arabs, Jews and Christians, Greeks, Armenians, Italians, Mohammedans and Copts, and not a few heretics. On one side passes the fellah-woman, a basket of oranges skilfully poised on her head, erect, with perfect carriage and laughing eyes, and the elastic step of a child of the desert—*incedit regina*. There a fat old Turk rolling along in his carriage; two "sayisses" crying before him to clear the way, a bloated specimen of the governmental class of the old type. "*Nous allons changer tout cela*." At least so they say!

On all sides are specimens of the Levantine youth, the most objectionable animal that walks. He is dressed in fez, tight coat, white waistcoat, and trumpet-mouth trousers, with the genuine "fall" over a shiny patent-leather boot. These youths loaf about, and consider that they pay a handsome compliment to any lady on whom they deign to smile. This self-conceit is the more ludicrous in men so puny, depraved, and unhealthy-looking as these.

Here comes a splendid Bedouin, with the sunlight touching his profile and showing off his wild beauty as a healthy contrast to the wretched-looking Greeks and Armenians round him. He is dressed in rags; but they are poetic rags. A piece of rough canvas is tied round his head by a double strand of twisted rope. His chest is bare, showing a magnificent throat, while the black hair, beard, and moustache, that have never known a razor, form a frame for his face. But the gleaming eyes are his chief beauty, deep and earnest, with a restless untamed glance, and fringed on either lid with long curling lashes; eyes that English ones never look on at home.

After him comes a serene and dignified Arab of the higher class, with mantle flowing to the ground, and slow step; his green turban proclaims him a descendant of the Prophet. Next a Turkish lady of rank, seated astride a donkey. Her knees are up to her chin, and she is enveloped in a black silk robe, and followed by an attendant negro. Then the old familiar shouts of the "sayisses" and donkey boys, "Beware!" "To the left!" "To the right!" "Your feet!" "Take care, my girl!" "Take care, my lady!" "Beware, O Frank!" "Your back!" And another carriage rolls past, or two or three donkeys come charging among the crowd, which disperses right and left, to close up again behind as densely as ever.

Most of the shops are stocked with cloths and articles of dress, whilst here and there a vendor of so-called "antiquities" hangs out a sign proclaiming to strangers his calling. Half of the goods come from Manchester, Birmingham, or Lyons. The few things really worth buying in the Mooskee are Damascus cotton and silk table-covers, scarves, and curtains, richly embroidered by hand in dark gold silk. A few really good old tapestries and broideries are sometimes to be picked up, and the Algerine many-coloured rugs and shawls are not to be passed by unadmired.

At last the Mooskee is traversed. A turning to the left leads into the Turkish Bazaar. This little street is always very busy,—women sitting before their baskets of eggs and vegetables chattering like magpies; men selling curded milk, sweetmeats, and cakes; shops of native goods on each side, full of the pottery of Siut and of Upper Egypt generally, or of pipes, brass dishes and bowls, and other trifles too numerous to mention.

About a hundred yards from the entrance into this street, a turning to the right gives entrance to the Turkish Bazaar. A very obese and smiling old gentleman sits on one side selling Turkey towels, dressing-gowns, and such-like goods; while opposite to him is a wrinkled and toothless old

Arab, whose shop is looked after by an extremely fat and bashful negro boy, who blushes perceptibly through his ebony if remarks are passed on



The Cairo Donkey Boy.

him, then comes a smile, and sometimes a laugh, which shows very white ivories and the very pinkest of tongues. Past these two janitors are a few inferior shops, and then the passage bends to the right, whilst a long

lley trends away to the left, devoted to the manufacture of the red and yellow native shoes ("merakib" and "paboosh"). Strings and strings of slippers, of every kind and description, hang outside the shops all down the passage. The glow of colour is marvellous, softened as it is by the subdued light, and touched up here and there by a stray shaft of sunshine, while the sounds of hammering and polishing, and the voices of the workmen, give an idea of business which is quite lost on returning into the principal street of the Bazaar. There conversations are subdued, and there is little to trouble the repose of its inhabitants, always excepting the days of public auction, when the usually silent place is almost unrecognizable, with its yelling crowd hurrying to and fro, seeking higher bids for their articles, as they reiterate the last offer that has been made, and the ceaseless cry of "Harac! Harac!" As a rule, however, you will find half the shopkeepers asleep, and the others squatting so quiet and dignified on their Persian carpets with their narghilehs, that it seems almost a shame to disturb their contemplation in order to ask the price of a piastre bead.

A turning to the right a little farther on leads into one of the Carpet Bazaars, another picture. The floor is strewn with carpets from Persia, India, and Turkey, prayer-rugs to be worn through by the knees of devotees, camel trappings, rich in material and elaborate in workmanship, ornamental donkey saddle-bags (the prettiest front for a cushion imaginable), and all kinds and shapes and sizes of carpet-work. The prices vary immensely. On one side is an English lady being asked five times the value of a worn-out rug, because, forsooth, "it is much antique," while a Parisian shopkeeper, with his fat and *passé* wife, is buying largely at a low rate. Apart from these is a Russian prince being fleeced handsomely, and the profits will be divided between the dragoman, the disreputable Jew broker who haunts the precincts, and the old sheikh of the market, who is swearing by his father's beard that he is ruining himself out of pure affection for the Russian, while he pockets his cent. per cent. This same old gentleman is quite a character in his way. He is a Nubian, and has just returned from the Paris Exhibition. There he must have done "good bazaar," to judge from the inflexibility he now exhibits to offers of a third of the price he asks, which once were sure to overcome his objections, especially if the money were exhibited to him, the real gold, "hard to get, and hard to hold," but still harder to let go for the Arab. Too much civilization has spoiled the old sheikh, it is to be feared; but his market is still as beautiful as ever, open to the sky, with carpets stowed in piles on the shelves, heaped up against the old grey stone, and strewn on the

flagged floor. The paint-brush of Lewis might perhaps almost show it, but scarcely a pen.

On leaving this bazaar we come upon a few very second-rate shops, filled with English and French goods of no value, badly worked slippers, hideous *cuflas* (or head-scarves), pipe-stems, etc., etc. Distinctions are odious and comparisons invidious, so that it would be scarcely fair to recommend any particular "dookhan."

Now comes the Turkish Bazaar proper, kept by Turks, Armenians, and Persians, many of them extremely rich. One of them is said to have refused £50,000 the other day for some jewels to which some of the Khedive's ladies had taken a fancy. Most of them are old men, with grave, thoughtful faces, notably a grand old Circassian, whose eyes have retained all their fire though his long beard is as white as snow on his pale-green robe (galabeeah). There is little bargaining with him. If his price is considered too high he seldom condescends to argue the point, but with a wave of the hand to his attendant the object in question is consigned again to the shelf whence it came. He leans back and draws a long pull from his narghileh, which he exhales slowly from the mouth and nose before he speaks, and then it is on some other subject.

Turning to the left, the Cotton Market (once the Slave Mart) lies before you, perhaps one of the most picturesque of these courts. It is a quadrangle, open to the air above, so that the lights and shades are clear and distinct. Against the walls lie heaps of raw cotton that has never been used, and also quantities of old stuff, waiting to be carded and made up. This work is done by a man who uses a strong bamboo-and-catgut bow, and a mallet something like a dumb-bell, but with a more defined rim to it. The bow hangs at a suitable height, about a foot from the ground, suspended from a cane like a fishing-rod, but much stouter. This cane gives the necessary spring to the bow. Holding the bow lightly in his left hand, the worker presses the string against the raw cotton, and strikes it with his heavy mallet with a peculiar cross-stroke, which makes the rim of the hammer catch the string after the body of it. The string thus catches several reverberations, and scatters the cotton before it in small fleecy morsels. It is difficult to describe, and the neatness of the contrivance and its great simplicity must be seen to be thoroughly understood.

In various attitudes about the square are standing and seated its frequenters; some busy at stitching up the cotton between two gay cloths to form a "yorghen," or mattress, others stuffing pillows and cushions, and many doing nothing to all appearance but chatting in the sun. These,

however, seem to think there is every need of their interference in a bargain, and it is a matter of an hour, or an hour and a half, to buy half a dozen rutls of cotton.

Meanwhile you will be seated, and a pretty little boy will present you with cups of the strong black Mocha habitually drunk in Egypt. He is a necessary feature in the picture, which must be filled up with two or three peacocks, who strut along with conscious pride among the cotton and on the ledges and gables of the time-worn stone. A gorgeous awning of red, white, and yellow hangs down from the wall over the entrance to the master's house. The man who hung it must have had an artist's eye, for it just gives the necessary colour and shade to the whole scene, and harmonizes perfectly with all its surroundings. Two or three sheep and goats walk about the square, and a sleepy old cat is basking next the door in the eternal sunshine of Cairo. Is it not worth buying cotton merely to obtain the pleasure of so much unstudied and almost natural beauty?

Leading out of this part of the bazaar is a side aisle with one or two very good shops in it. At one of them is a most splendid prayer-carpet, but the price asked is so enormous, on account of the gold work on it, that it is likely to remain some time yet in the market. Here, also, we have several native manufacturers, especially in brass-ware, and any day they may be seen at work on the large brazen trays and saucers which are brought round to the various hotels afterwards by the brokers and sold for ten times the price at which they might be procured from the workman's hand. It is also a great street for beggars, who pursue the hapless European with most redoubtable pertinacity, thrusting a filthy baby or a stump of a limb in his or her face.

On Monday and Thursday, auction days, the scene is changed indeed, and the place hardly recognizable, one might almost say visible, for the jostling crowd that hurries backwards and forwards through the principal arcade. A continuous din from all the sellers who run from one end of the bazaar to another holding out and crying their goods, the wordy disputes between buyer and seller, the clang of the brass-ware, struck to show its superior quality, the chatter of the women, and the hurrying of many feet, and rustling of long robes, make up a sound, that, echoed back from the narrow high walls, soon becomes almost deafening. At all times the goods are most miscellaneous, but of late perhaps more so than ever, owing to the distress prevalent among rich and poor, who alike take this opportunity of realizing a little ready money. Rich broideries, slightly worn beautifully worked robes, veils, slippers, tea-urns, cushions, and

jewels, come from the harems, and some of the latter are of extraordinary beauty. An ornament in the shape of a bird of paradise was carried about lately by one of the slaves, formed entirely of sapphires, emeralds, diamonds, rubies, and pearls, with a nine-feathered tail, each feather being formed of finely-twisted, pliable gold wire, thickly encrusted with brilliants. It was bought for a comparatively small sum by a dealer, who, the next day, asked double what he had given for it. Many rings are also now in the market, and watches, with which the owners are willing to part for much less than their value.

It is on auction day that the greatest number of women are to be seen abroad, as they take advantage of this chance to buy, sell, and exchange on their own account; and a great many of the high-class ladies attend regularly, though principally in order to enjoy a gossip. Naturally they use the opportunity to give rendezvous very largely, and so combine business with the double pleasure of amusing themselves and cheating their lords and masters out of their idea of a wife's duty. Besides these Turkish and Circassian women, a great number of Copt ladies come in their graceful trailing veils, some of whom are exceedingly handsome, though generally distinguishable by a curiously haggard look in their eyes, arising from I know not what. Like their European sisters, these Eastern fair ones have tongues which run almost faster than their limited ideas require; in fact, the stock conversation is much like the scandal of a small tea-party in a provincial town, only the ladies drink black coffee and sit cross-legged here, being decorously veiled up to the eyes.

Towards noon the aisle begins to empty itself, and the backward and forward stream begins to turn decidedly outward. The man with the Circassian swords and two old blunderbusses has apparently done no business, as he carries them out on his shoulder. Here comes the Persian who had three rugs for sale. He is jubilant, and has now a silk "cufia" over his turban, which he has probably changed for an old amulet he was hawking about, whilst four or five napoleons are hid away in a purse in the breast of his "caftan." The Algerian seems to have fewer parakeets in his cage, and the sweetmeat-seller has only an ounce or two left on his tray.

The slipper bazaar is shutting for lunch, and the fat little nigger is asleep at the entrance, his black head pillowed on his arm amid a heap of coloured rugs. His *vis-à-vis*, the good-natured towel-seller, looks supremely peaceful, and, if possible, more contented than usual, and as the street is reached a murmur comes from him, "It is finished; all praise to God!"

"A WILD COUNTRY."

A DREARY day and a dreary prospect; the air is damp and chilly, and a thin misty rain is falling and slowly penetrating to the skin of the half-clothed little urchins, who are either crouching in the doorways, or wildly driving along their donkeys loaded with creels of turf.

We are surveying this prospect from the window of the hotel, when the waiter suddenly appears and announces that the car is at the door waiting to convey us to our journey's end. We find the landlord with a face fit to grace a funeral. From the moment of hearing our place of destination, he has looked upon us as raving mad, and has accordingly treated us with great forbearance, as people who are perhaps on the whole perfectly harmless, but not at all responsible for their actions. As for getting any information from him about the place, that is perfectly hopeless; when we approach the subject, he merely answers, "Ah, it's a wild country, sir!" sighs deeply, shrugs his shoulders, and walks off, evidently feeling that he has done his duty; and if we are rash enough to go after that, why, we must take the consequences. Around him stand the ostler, the waiter, the boots, and about a dozen little ragged gorsoons, who stare with all their might and main at the strangers, scramble to obtain a few pence which are scattered amongst them, and utter a wild "Ho-ho!" as the car rolls away; the landlord's parting sigh is wafted to us on the chilly wind, and has the effect of damping our dauntless spirits for at least one-half of the day. So we roll out of the town of Ballyferry, in the county of Mayo, Ireland, and are soon speeding along westward towards the ocean.

The beginning of the drive is scarcely very enjoyable: the misty rain falls unceasingly, and the chilly wind is gradually imparting rheumatic twinges through our bones; the country through which we are passing is truly "a wild country," for the most part flat and boggy, and disfigured here and there by unsightly mounds of fresh-cut turf, yet the recent rain has imparted a greenness and freshness to the small patches of pasture, and given tone and richness of colour to the little clumps of purple heather here and there dotted about the unsightly bogs, and the rich brown tinge of the somewhat sodden ground is greatly enhanced by the dark and lowering atmosphere; not a hill is to be seen and not a tree;

nothing but a dark and dreary waste, bordered on either side by a heavy mist and a threatening sky.

We are on our way to Storport, a little village which, to use the words of an advertisement, "is pleasantly situated on the north-west coast of Ireland, famous for its excellent shooting, fishing, and boating, and commanding an extensive view of the Atlantic Ocean."

Seduced by these enticing words, we have been induced to leave our snug little abode in the metropolis, and have set out with heroic hearts to try life in the wilds of Erris. But we have not been many hours in Ballyferry, the nearest point attainable by rail, and fifty long miles from our destination, when our ardour is considerably damped by the dreary prognostics of O'Shaughnessy, the innkeeper, and his various retinue. Even the driver of the car seems to be affected while under his master's eye; but directly we turn the corner which shuts the hotel from sight, his spirits rise considerably, he cracks his whip, shouts, whistles, yells, and we speed along like lightning—soon to be joined by an excited Irishman, dressed in a blue bob-tail coat with brass buttons, knee-breeches, and a brimless chimney-pot hat, who is smoking a very dirty short pipe, and is seated on the back of a donkey. An exciting race ensues: our driver cracks his whip and whistles, the Irishman brandishes on high the shillelagh, and shouts and screams at the top of his voice, and we rattle along in a perfect shower of mud and rain; the little donkey keeps up bravely, and once or twice is on the point of leaving us behind altogether; but at last, after a short but sharp ride, with a defiant wave of the shillelagh, Pat disappears down an adjoining road. After this little exciting incident, the drive becomes rather dreary and uninteresting; the thick mist shuts out any view we might have of the surrounding country; the driver seems to lose all his spirit, but he still endeavours in a moody way to urge the horses on. Hoping to put a little life into him, we hand him a drink from our flask, and tell him to take it easy, as the horses are perhaps rather tired after their late race; but he has evidently no intention of letting them "take it easy," for he whips and shouts louder than ever; then he turns to us, and breathlessly exclaims,—

"Faith, sir, the lazy beasts must make better speed than they're doing, or we'll never reach the river before night."

"Well, suppose we don't—it's not such a dreadful place, I suppose?"

"Troth, it is, though," he answers emphatically; "the river is tidal, and when it's swollen with the rain, the currents are strong enough to sweep the horses off their legs. It's a dangerous place,—steep hills on



both sides, and a rough broken road—one false step would maybe lead to your death. Did ye not hear about it in Ballyferry?"

"Not a word. Have you ever crossed it before?"

"Only once. I was taking some young colleens across—it was these ponies I had—when we got into the water, one of the traces broke, and the whole weight fell on the one pony. It was a mercy she was a quiet and a strong beast, and she managed to carry us through. It had been a dry season, and the water was low, and the tide was out, or, Lord! I think we should have been killed, for the poor beast could never have stood against the current with such a load on her back."

"And do you think it is much swollen to-day?"

"Faith I do, for not one dry day have we seen for eight weeks; but we'll just stop here and ask about it from a man I know."

Suiting the action to the word, he accordingly pulls up before a little thatched cottage which stands on the roadside, and calls out some mystical sentence in Irish. After this has been repeated once or twice, a queer, smoke-dried-looking old man makes his appearance, and answers in the same mystical tongue. A conversation thereupon ensues, which, to judge from the despairing looks of the driver, is scarcely of an agreeable nature. At last he explains to us that things look as black as they can possibly be: the tide is in, the river is dreadfully swollen by the recent rain, and we most probably won't be able to cross before midnight, when the tide will be out. At any rate, we decide to go on and examine for ourselves, as we may after all be able to get through, and if the worst comes we must just camp on the banks until daybreak. So after again receiving the cheering information, "It's to a *wild country* your honour's goin'," we once more speed on our way.

As the weather still shows no signs of clearing, we roll ourselves comfortably in our rugs and prepare to take a slight doze; but just as we are falling into a quiet sleep, we are suddenly called back to this fretful world by a frightful babble of voices and the car coming to a full stop. On looking up to ascertain the cause of the delay, we see that we are close on the banks of a river which rushes down with great force between two steep hills. On the opposite bank are about half a dozen ragged-looking Irishmen, wildly gesticulating and shouting out some unintelligible words which are almost drowned in the roar of the waters. We look around to the driver for an explanation, but he has disappeared from the box, and is down at the water's edge answering his Irish friends in their own wild way. Our first fears are at once confirmed—*this* is the river;

but how *are* we to cross it? It is so swollen by the continual rain and the full tide, that it will be almost impossible for the horses to get through. With a quickly-beating heart we anxiously watch the faces of the men as they carry on their mystical conversation. Then one of them commences to sound the passage by sticking in a long stick. This proceeding is not of the slightest use, however, as he can't reach half a yard beyond the bank; but it evidently satisfies his companions, for, after a little more shouting and waving, the driver returns and announces his intention of crossing.

"The men think we had better make a dash at it," he says, "and we'll maybe come through safe—for if we wait for days we'll never have a better chance."

"But do you think those men are to be trusted?" we ask.

"Faith, are they not, sir?" he answers indignantly; "they've all the O'Donnell blood in their veins, and if I bade them lift the ponies and *carry* them over, they'd never refuse me!"

Silenced at once by this proof of clannish fidelity, we allow him to prepare the car, and, when all is ready, we screw up our courage to the highest pitch, and bravely take our seat by his side. The horses go down the hill at a spanking rate, and so steep is the descent that once or twice we feel that the car will certainly be overturned; but the ruggedness of the road acts as a sort of drag and saves us from any catastrophe. Then we enter the river—such a splashing, jolting, and shouting was never heard! only the horses' backs are above water, and the car is half buried. However, they bring us safely through, gallop furiously up the steep ascent beyond, never once pausing until they stand panting and steaming on the top of the hill. We glance back and shudder at the awful place through which we have come; then we inquire how far it is to Storport.

"Ten miles," is the quiet reply; "but there is a little shebeen close by where we will take a rest."

The shebeen referred to is a tiny thatched hut standing in a roadside bog. When we first enter the room the turf-smoke is so thick that we can see nothing, but after a few moments our eyes grow more accustomed to it, and we can discern the bright flames of a fire which is burning in the middle of the room, the smoke issuing through a hole in the roof. Over the fire is a large black cauldron, suspended upon a thick black iron chain which hangs from the rafters, and around it squat on their hams about half a dozen old women with their elbows on their knees, all smoking short clay pipes very black with age, and chattering away in Irish.

The whole scene forcibly reminds us of the Witch Scene in "Macbeth," only the cauldron, instead of containing some mystic spell, is filled with substantial potatoes.

The floor of the other half of the room is strewn with straw, on which repose two pigs, two cows, a sheep, a horse, and any number of hens.

We speedily escape into the fresh air to examine the state of the weather and the country. The thin misty rain is still falling, but the lowering sky has begun to clear and to show signs of fine weather coming. The country is of the same flat and boggy description as it has been throughout the journey, nothing to enliven the scene, not even a stone wall to vary the monotony of the desert land—all is "dull, flat, and unprofitable;" the very road is almost a bog, so sodden is it by the continual rain, and outside the door of the hut the pigs and ducks are waddling in the mire! The prospect so damps our spirits that we hail with joy the appearance of the horses. They are led by an old man dressed in the usual bob-tail coat and brimless hat, who addresses us with a queer mixture of dignity and respect.

"You're going to Storport, sir?" he says, touching his brimless hat in a dignified, military manner.

"Yes."

"It's a *wild country*, sir!"

We turned our eyes on the surrounding prospect. "If it's wilder than this," we involuntarily exclaim, "it must be wild indeed!"

"You see, sir," he continues, "here we lie nice and low, and the wind can't very well get at us; but in troth, sir, at Storport——"

We hear no more, for, driven to desperation by the reiteration of these dreary prophecies, we jump into the car and drive away. The dismal weather gradually clears off, and ere long we get a peep of sunshine. The land is less sodden, and here and there it is relieved by little grassy hillocks. As we roll along the hillocks gradually disappear, and are replaced by fine heathery hills, and ere long we are aroused by the joyful words, "This is Storport, sir!" and we catch our first sight of the little village. One glance convinces us that our time has been well spent. The bad effects of the dreary prophecies which we have heard everywhere on the road, vanish from our minds as we approach the quiet little haven of beauty which opens out before our delighted gaze.



II.

THE small cluster of huts which bears the dignified title of "The Village" stands upon a grassy hillock, about two hundred yards from the sea-shore. A magnificent range of hills runs for miles inland, and almost entirely surrounds it; and, exactly opposite, stretching far out into the sea, and partly cutting off the sweep of the open ocean, is Erris Head.

A sandy bar, formed by the incessant washing of the sea upon the soft sand, stretches from the cliffs on either side, and forms a sort of break-water, keeping the little bay within a state of comparative calm; and so effectual is it, that even in the roughest winter weather, when outside the rollers and breakers are raging wildly, and the spray is dashing about the rocks and over the summits of the cliffs, the bay within is comparatively still, and one might use a small boat with perfect safety. It is impossible, however, to cross the bar until the waves have entirely subsided and sunk into a glassy calm.

There are two estuaries, one on either side of the village, which extend for miles inland, winding and turning among the hills. At high tide they swell into magnificent fjords or arms of the sea, but at low water they sink into insignificant stretches of mud and rivulets; and sometimes, especially during the spring tides, it is possible to walk across the strand dry-shod.

It is then that the population flock down, spade in hand, and dig vigorously among the sand for the little sand-eels. The people have neither fishing-smacks nor skiffs; the boats generally used for fishing purposes being called "carraghs," that is, the bare skeleton of a boat covered with thickly-tarred calico or tanned skin. In shape they very much resemble the Norwegian skiffs, being rounded and coming to a sharp point at either end. They draw almost no water, and are so light that one would almost think a puff of wind would blow them away; but they are very swift, and will face, when well managed, a tremendous sea. They carry no sail, but they are easily rowed, requiring only one man when an ordinary boat would need the strength of three. They are almost the only boats used by the fishermen, who have acquired great skill in the management of them, and will take them out to sea and come through a tremendous storm in safety, when in another boat they would be lost.

After we have been for some days located in Storport, we manage to

secure a curragh, and with a crew of four sturdy men we set out for a row "round the cliffs."

The day is fine. The little village lies basking in a golden blaze of sunshine: far away the ranges of hills are wrapt in a hazy mist, their jagged crags and rounded summits clearly discernible against a bluish-grey sky. The wild waters of the Atlantic are hushed in stately calm, and mirrored in the glassy surface are the surrounding cliffs. Not a ripple is on the bar as we glide gently over it, and not a sound is heard save the splash, splash of the oars as we silently sit and enjoy the beauty of the scene.

The gaunt grey cliffs loom darkly above us as we paddle about at their base, noiselessly entering various little creeks and corners and tiny secluded bays, where the sand-larks are wading, as if for coolness, in the shallow sparkling water which softly ripples over the silvern sand.

Farther on we enter a narrow passage cut between two enormous cliffs, one of which points, needle-like, up to the cloudless sky. The water below is black; but the cliffs at first appear to be as white as snow. A second glance, however, shows hundreds and thousands of sea-gulls sitting quietly upon their nests, which are built upon the small pieces of rock projecting from the face of the cliff. The little downy heads of the young ones constantly appear over the edges of the nests, and receive cheering chirps from the fond old birds who are so carefully guarding them.

Our approach has been so sudden and so silent that we remain for some time unobserved, and even when their quick eyes catch sight of us, the birds seem in no way disturbed, and evidently have not the slightest intention of deserting their posts. A random shot fired in the air soon brings them down in one white shower, but after whirling and screaming for some little time, they very composedly settle again on their nests.

Leaving the gulls to the undisturbed possession of the cliff, we pass on out of the passage and strike out to sea, and after about an hour's good rowing we come in sight of "Goat Island."

It is a solitary island rising up to an enormous height above the level of the sea. It is entirely unpopulated, save for the great flocks of sea-birds which yearly build their nests in the enormous caverns hollowed out of the rock. As we approach, a sharp jagged crag bends above us; but, detecting malice in the attitude, we hurry on, and fortunately escape an enormous boulder which is suddenly detached and rolls with a tremendous crash into the sea. Next we enter a passage which, as we

proceed, broadens out into a good-sized channel, and we find ourselves in what would be an enormous cavern if it had another roof than the clear blue sky. Here the surge is so great that our frail curragh is in a fair way of being upset, when one of the men, intending to make her secure, jumps airily out on to the rocks, misses his footing, and gently disappears beneath the surface of the water! We begin seriously to think that our expedition will have a tragic ending, for the surge is so great, the passage so narrow, and the curragh so crank, that our means of assisting him seem small indeed; but the men, more accustomed to such mishaps, are of a different opinion. Two of them coolly secure the end of a rope and lightly leap out on to the rocks, leaving the third in the boat, who, when the unfortunate victim appears on the surface, slips a noose under his armpits, and he is gently hauled out on to the rocks, very little, if any, the worse for his bath.

After this little exciting incident we land and examine the rocks. They rise up to such a height that the brain turns dizzy when we try to decipher the tiny specks which are floating above, like gnats in the sun-ray. As they descend, the shrill whistle of the curlew reaches our ear; we crouch in a corner, but the wary birds are not to be deceived; their quick eyes soon see the danger, and with a taunting cry of "Curlew!" they disappear round a corner of the rock.

Slowly, very slowly, we make our way along the slippery rocks, now going down on our knees and passing some dangerous bit on all-fours, now seizing a small projecting piece of stone and holding on for very life, while our feet search for a cranny among the slippery seaweed below. Thus we pass along, avoiding any mishap, until we come to an opening in the rock, and we enter a low narrow passage, apparently leading into the interior of the island. Here the air is damp and chilly, our voices have a hollow unearthly sound, and it is so dark that we have to grope our way. As we proceed, the passage broadens and faint streaks of light appear; next we hear the deep-drawn breathing of the waters; then we are gladdened with a burst of broad sunlight, and we find ourselves approaching an enormous cavern.

The channel here is considerably broader than the last, and the cave is open at either end. About midway in the channel is a good-sized weedy reef, which is covered with great black seals. Our appearance causes a general panic, and they all rush down to the water and swim about like dogs. We gaze around and examine every creek and cavern within our reach, but we can discover nothing; all is quiet and peaceful

as a tomb. Our voices echo through the vault and our footsteps give forth a hollow unearthly sound. Not a living thing is visible in this enormous cavern until we fire a shot; and then, as if by magic, the whole air is filled with birds. Puffins, sea-gulls, guillemots, and any number of others that we cannot recognize, swarm about us and make the air resound with their screams; but they have a duty to perform,—they have hungry little ones up there in the nests awaiting their return; so after a few wild turns they all disappear, leaving the place as quiet and peaceful as before.

Having seen all there is to be seen, we wend our way slowly back through the dark passage and embark on board the curragh.

Ere we finally push off and take a last farewell of Goat Island 'tis twilight. The silence of night has fallen on land and sea, the weird cries of the sea-birds ring with strange echoes through the night. The enormous cliffs, magnified by the dim light, tower up like gaunt spectres from the glassy waters which wash unceasingly about their feet, and the heavens are sparkling in all their starry radiance.

Ever and anon, as we pass noiselessly along the cliffs, we are startled by a great flutter of wings; and some frightened sea-bird, awakened from his slumbers by the splashing of the oars, passes so close to us that his wing almost brushes our cheek, and his shrill cries resound with strange echoes through the night as he fades slowly away.

As we leap on to the shore at Storport we are accosted by an old man, who implores us to go with him to see his daughter who is sick. There is no doctor in the village, he says, and he thinks *we* may know how to cure her. We must come at once, or she may die before we reach the house.

We follow him for about a mile over the hills, stumbling through the darkness, and tumbling in and out of miserable bog-holes, until we stand before a low thatched hut, surrounded with mud and dirt.

When we enter, the smoke is so thick that we can see nothing, but we hear the grunting of pigs, the babbling of old hags, and the moans of the sick woman, and next we are startled by the lowing of a cow which is standing at our side. The smell which reaches us is so offensive that we are on the point of rushing again into the fresh air, but remembering the poor woman who is helplessly lying there, and to whom we may be of some service, we strengthen up our failing spirit and keep our stand. By-and-bye the smoke clears, and we can distinctly see all the objects in the room.

In a corner stands a dilapidated four-post bedstead, which, to our amazement, is unoccupied; but on the floor before the fire is strewn a little straw, and on *this* lies the sick woman, looking pale as death, and uttering feeble moans. Around her squat the hags, some on the floor, some on benches, and one is actually sitting upon the upturned black cauldron! They are all smoking, weeping, and waiting for the sufferer to die, without lifting a finger either to try and save her, or to alleviate her sufferings in any way. Behind the women stands a group of men, commenting in audible whispers upon her ghastly look and the certainty of her death—all of which are followed by a feeble moan from the sufferer! We approach to see if we can do anything to relieve her; but faugh! the smell is so great that we unconsciously draw back. The rags which she has upon her, and the rags which are thrown over her, are positively decayed with filth. After she has been washed and put upon a clean bed we are enabled to ascertain her real state; we find that there is not much wrong; and with the aid of soap and water, and a few simple drugs, we soon make an entire cure of her.

But, alas! little do we guess the awful consequences of this simple deed. The news of our success has spread rapidly, and we are wildly called upon to cure the village sick. Scores of sufferers daily surround the little cabin in which we dwell, some on donkeys, some on ponies, and others in carts; and now and then we are requested to visit a patient who is too far gone to be removed from the straw on which he or she lies. But fortunately for us these occasions are of very rare occurrence; were they more frequent, we should resign our post, and fly ignominiously from the village, for the cause of half the diseases is the filth and dirt in which the people live. Soap and water and clean garments are our principal remedies, and are in most cases marvellously successful.

The ignorance of the population is pitiful. There is not a man, woman, or child in the whole village who is able to read a single sentence or to form a letter. They are not ambitious; they are content to live on as their fathers did before them, to cut and gather turf, and to cultivate a small piece of ground which is rented with each hut. The spirit of enterprise never once rises in their dull and listless dispositions. They plod through their lives without the slightest variation or enlightenment, and then quietly fall to sleep, leaving their children to pursue the same course after them. Yet with all their faults, they are very generous and kind-hearted. The stranger is always made welcome to their hearth and

board, and if they receive a kindness, however slight, they always endeavour to make an ample return.

The only little bit of deception in which they indulge is the making of *Potheen* or mountain-dew, although there is in the village a barrack full of military-looking policemen. Despite the fact that several illicit stills are yearly found and seized, and their owners compelled to pay the heavy fine of six pounds, the authorities have not been able to stop the sale or manufacture of this contraband article.

Late in the autumn, when the grain is all gathered and threshed, and the distillers are prepared to set about their work, a little herd-boy and a dog are stationed on a hill commanding a view of the whole country. When any dangerous-looking party is seen approaching, the dog is sent back to the house to warn his master, and no matter at what stage of the process he has arrived, whether the grain is merely steeped and dried, or whether the whiskey is completely finished, it is all scattered to the winds. But the fluid is not *traded* in to any great extent; it is made principally for home use to keep out the cold in the winter-time, when the snow is thickly covering the frozen ground, and the cold north-wester is blowing in from the storm-tossed sea. Poor, half-frozen creatures! what would life be worth to them without this one comfort? It is the delight, the excitement, and the only one luxury of their lives! A solitary people, in a solitary waste, living with their pigs and cattle in wretched little mud huts, their only clothing a few dirty rags, and their only food potatoes, who could deny them this one drop of comfort?

As summer fades slowly away, and winter approaches, the sea becomes boisterous, and an unceasing roar fills the ears. The fierce rollers of the Atlantic dash wildly upon the sand and around the jagged cliffs, which stand like gaunt spectres towering up midst a perfect shower of foam, while the green sward above is sparkling with the radiance of a thousand gems. The air is crisp and sharp, and frozen ground crackles and glistens beneath the feet. The estuaries are perfectly alive with birds. Swarms of wild duck and widgeon are paddling leisurely about, the golden plover are running and pecking about the sand, flocks of wild geese lighting on the promontories beyond, and sea-gulls and terns are hovering in the clear frosty air. The long range of hills stretches in one jet-black line along the clear horizon; and the tiny thatched hamlets, which are dotted here and there on the hill-sides like tiny sea-birds crouching for shelter midst thick clumps of purple heather, are thrown out and glorified by the clear frosty background.

But such weather as this is not common in Storport. Ere long the chilly mist descends and enfolds the hills in its clammy mantle, the sky becomes heavy and threatening, the wind roars, and the hail-storms rage wildly and beat fiercely about the tiny tottering cabins, freezing the blood of the half-clothed little gorsoons who are playing about in the mire. This is real winter weather! This is the weather for the sportsman to come and commit frightful ravages amongst those swarms of wild birds which are daily flocking in over the tempestuous sea; this is the time for him to visit Storport, when it is lying like a frightened child rocked in the cradle of the tempest!

A crash and a whirl! and we are speeding away from the little village where we had spent so many happy months. We glance back with loving eyes for one last look, and see it crouching on the fringe of a tempestuous sea, wildly beaten upon by wind and rain; it becomes dimmer and dimmer; then it entirely fades away in a perfect whirlwind of hail and foam. We utter an involuntary sigh as we reluctantly turn our eyes elsewhere, for never once have we had cause to regret that we were induced to try a brief period of life in "*A Wild Country*."



ON SHORE IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

WHEN serving in a South Sea whaler, I spent a Sunday ashore, and will write out from my log the notes of my visit.

The old *Jane and Joshua* lay at anchor within the lagoon, her rusty cable, which seemed a profanation of the glassy water, scarce causing a creak in the hawse-hole, although the Pacific was thundering in snowy foam and rainbow-tinted silvery spray upon the reef. In the midst of the lapis-lazuli shield which it ringed in from the ocean rose the island, a beautiful boss. Its foliage was of lovely varied greens, but where its rocks were bare they gleamed like gold in the sunshine.

We could see to the very bottom of the basin as we rowed ashore,—groves of black sea-rods, with funny little sea-horses swimming about in them upright, acting as a foil to the coral,—coral everywhere, white, creamy, dotted, red, rose-pink; coral in trees, in bushes, in vines, in flowers, and in great flowerpots overflowing with their wealth; add to these corallines, pink, green, scarlet, and purple sea-weeds, sea-urchins, sea-anemones, sponges, and starfish, bright-hued thorn-oysters, spider-

crabs burrowing in the white coral sand, a tridacna, also at the bottom, just opening its huge shells, more than a yard across; a devil-ray, more than four times as broad, floating on the surface; and zebra and other strangely-marked and gorgeously-coloured fish, darting about or poised motionless in mid-water.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire,—
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire."

Brazilian plum-trees, bread-fruit-trees, covered with broad, brilliant incised leaves, and laden with green, snowy-pithed globes, sugar-canes, bananas, cocoa-nut palms, yams, orange-trees, sweet potato patches,—a lavish lushness of vegetation made the island a cornucopia. No wonder its pigs and little darkies were so plump. In the glorious sunshine there flashed and floated birds and butterflies that vied with each other, and with jewels, in the dazzling splendour of their hues.

To a sea-tossed man spending his life amongst the roughest of white men, there seemed (however unjustly) very little self-sacrifice in the good missionary's having to spend his amongst admiring dark men in the snug pretty manse, parsonage, or whatever it should be called. It was a one-floored structure, with a raised verandah, on which sundry doors and windows opened, like houses up the country in Australia; only this had a much more neatly fenced and kept garden than a good many "shepherd kings," even in the settled districts, there can boast of. In as well as around the garden, there were some of the noble trees I have mentioned. It looked as if some one must work pretty hard in it at some time or other,—the products of English seeds, mementoes of home with which a garden-loving Englishman surrounds himself wherever he may be, must have required assiduous pruning to check their otherwise unremitting rampancy,—but now the garden basked in Sabbath peace. The house was thatched with palm-leaves, built of wood and coral, and whitewashed with coral lime. The good missionary, his gentle wife, and their brood of healthy children, wore the Sabbath hush which they put on with their Sunday linen—refreshing in its old-fashioned calm to one to whom for many a day it had been strange; but still they did not seem to be exactly sorry that they were to have the excitement of entertaining white guests, even on Sunday.

After a delicious breakfast, including, amongst other things, cocoa-nut milk and bread-fruit, there was still time before morning service for us to

go into the missionary's study. Its shelves he had sawn and planed and nailed up himself. Some of the old English books upon them he had re-bound with his own hands. In the room stood a printing-press, with which he printed [hymns, tracts, portions of Scripture, catechism, etc., for his converts, and those of his predecessors. He told us with a quiet smile, in which there was naturally a little pride, that he had set up a forge, and could do blacksmith's work also, and that he had superintended the building of a little cutter by his people in the English style. Some men-of-war officers, he added, had been good enough to say that a better could scarcely have been turned out at Cowes.

His library was also his museum. It contained, hung and propped up against the walls, a numerous collection of curiosities. Among other things we were shown very uncomfortable-looking bamboo pillows, somewhat like the bars on which inebriates have to rest their heads when consigned to the sloping board beds of some white men's dark police lock-ups; long-toothed combs made out of palm-leaves; fish-hooks of turtle-shell, oyster-shell, and bone; palm and pandanus baskets; clubs, spears, and daggers set with sharp teeth; caps of ceremony, with bristles all on end; carved cocoa-nut goblets; stone axes and adzes—the heads bound on to the ornamented handles with tight-lashed fibre; podgy little idols like statues of Puck in the rough, and others like Mrs. Gampish umbrellas with jagged handles and ferules.

We went to morning service in the chapel, listening to prayers, lessons, and sermons which we could not understand, and to hymns which we could partially understand, with such melodious heartiness and in such Welsh-like good harmony were they sung to old English tunes, by natives male and female. The men, when they came into the chapel, reverently doffed the white men's hats they wore, to show that they were "sons of the truth," not "devil's men," the title which their unconverted brethren allowed to be bestowed upon them without the slightest token of offence, nay, rather claiming it for themselves with somewhat proud complacency.

The chapel was a spacious, airy building of wattle and plaster, lime-washed white without, and a delicate red within. The doors and windows were painted green. A similarly built and decorated school-house joined on to the chapel, and around spread a green, shrub-planted school or chapel-yard, fenced in partly with unbarked logs.

During the service we could see some of the unconverted natives hanging about outside, listening to the singing,—wild-looking fellows, smeared with yellow, red, white, and greyish black, sometimes cutting

queer capers, but apparently with no hostile intent. Nay, one, almost persuaded to be a Christian, peeping in through a window, laughed heartily at the hearty kick which one of the idols received from its donor.

The missionary told us that he remembered the time when that laughter, on seeing him take an axe to chop off an idol's head, had rushed away howling, half in terror and half in rage, and hidden himself in the brush-wood. When the missionary had split the divinity into fuel, he made a fire with it in the open air, and on the stones it had heated baked peeled bread-fruit wrapped up in leaves. Of this he had eaten in public, and given to some converted natives, who also ate. No harm having come of the sacrilegious meal, the ex-howler, who once had denounced them in angry scorn as "Sea-scum, rotten driftwood," had ever since been becoming more and more respectful towards white folk.

The chapel was not the first which had been erected in the island. Its predecessor, and that, too, of the missionary's house, had been burnt down by the "sons of the devil;" but, at the time of my visit, the "sons of the truth" had decidedly got the upper hand. It seemed to be *vis inertiae* more than anything else which prevented the fast dwindling minority of heathen from becoming, at any rate, nominal Christians.

It was late before we took boat again. We sat with our hosts on the verandah in the evening until the stars came out in the clear sky and sowed the clear lagoon with their reflected gold, until the moon came up and plated it with its broad trembling silver—silvered also the surf, ever-roaring, in strange contrast to the lagoon's tranquillity.

We talked of the old country which the children liked to hear about, but appeared to have no particular wish to visit. Their father, too, save for a desire to return to it for awhile, to proclaim the fruits of his labours by word of mouth, and to beg for aid in men and money, had no longing for a land in which he felt that, after his life in the Pacific, he could find no place which he could fill with satisfaction to himself. But his gentle little wife was not quite weaned of her love of "home;" although without the slightest expression of discontent, she spoke somewhat wistfully of the friendly intercourse which her sisters in England could enjoy.

In the evening, accompanied by our kind hosts, we walked down to the bright water, whence we were pulled to the old *Jane and Joshua*, which next morning weighed anchor, and was towed out by her boats, the missionary and his family waving hearty farewell from their verandah.

